Starting today, Project Syndicate commentaries will be a weekly feature of the Opinion Section of the INQUIRER. An association of 230 newspapers in 108 countries, Project Syndicate has a lineup of writers that includes world-renowned opinion-makers like Desmond Tutu, Donald Rumsfeld, Jorge Castañeda, Michel Rocard, Richard Haass and Joseph S. Nye.

■ SUPER / C2

KC Concepcion writes on spilt milk, growing up, life's incoherences

■ METRO / A21

2 explosions rock police compound in Pasig City; no one hurt

■ WORLD / A9

Former Soviet Union leaders ordered the hit on Pope John Paul II

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Peso, financial markets euphoric over lifting of 1017

By Doris C. Dumlao

AS EXPECTED, THE FINANCIAL MARKETS WERE euphoric over the lifting of the state of national emergency on Friday with the peso surging to a fresh three-and-a-half year high against the US dollar.

The peso opened at 51.20, hit an intra-day high of 51.14 before closing at 51.18 against the US currency, its highest finish since July 30,

PESO/ A8

Chilling effect was on cops, not media, officer reveals

By Luige A. del Puerto

HORROR EFFECT ANG SA AMIN!

IF PROCLAMATION NO. 1017 had any "chilling effect" on the media at all, the police said they didn't see it. In fact, said Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, it was he who got spooked.

"No, I don't think [I saw]

CHILLING/ A19

GMA lifts state of emergency but …

UPLIFTING VIEW: A beaming President Arroyo is a portrait of confidence as she walks past the columns of Kalayaan Hall inside the Palace compound after announcing that she was lifting the state of national emergency. But she warned that she would not hesitate to use the full force of the law against those who would engage in "adventurism." PCPO-MALACAÑANG

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO LIFTED the emergency rule she imposed exactly a week ago yesterday, claiming a "stronger" country. But she declared that she would not hesitate to act "with the same force of will and determination" if her opponents persisted in "inflicting instability on the nation and hurting our economy."

"I am happy to report that the cabal is broken and it is time to get back to the real business of governing. I am confident that order has been restored. Therefore, with the power vested in me by our Constitution, I declare that effective immediately, the state of emergency is no longer in effect," Ms Arroyo, dressed in a blue suit, said in a recorded speech aired on government TV/radio.

She signed Presidential Proclamation No. 1021 to lift the state of national emergency she had imposed through PP 1017.

But her men were also quick to say that the public could not rest easy just yet.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said Ms Arroyo would not hesitate to again declare emergency rule should she decide there was "clear and present danger" to the government.

"It is a prerogative of the President under the Constitution that if there is clear and present danger to the national security, [she] can consider [reviving emergency rule]," Cruz told reporters, adding that it was the threat of an "armed attack" that prompted Ms Arroyo to declare a state of emergency on Feb. 24.

"The most important achievement of [PP] 1017 is the preemptive action, to prevent an armed attack against the government. Why should we wait until there is [one]? It's better to have preemptive and drastic measures so there is no opportunity for an armed attack against the government," he said.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno also said that

GMA LIFTS/ A8

Crackdown continues

Editor, 2 columnists charged; more 'intimidations' feared

MORE THAN RELIEF, SKEPTICISM MARKED YESTERDAY'S lifting of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, with various groups warning the people against letting down their guard.

Anticipating that President Macapagal-Arroyo would lift emergency rule, as her security advisers suggested on Friday, around 200 lawyers assembled in front of the IBP headquarters in Pasig City hours before she made the announcement.

"The price of democracy is a vigilant citizenry," said Joel Cadiz, national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

"If we sleep on our rights, this government will continue to trample on us. If 1017 is lifted, and we are repressed, that's still martial law. This is only paper. We want substance," he said.

Cadiz said that even if PP 1017 were lifted, "there could still be an absence of the freedom of assembly, warrantless arrests, and a threat [to] and intimidation [of] the media."

"We must continue to assert our rights," he declared.

Yesterday, the crackdown continued.

Hours after the President lifted PP 1017, charges were filed against the editor-publisher and two columnists of a newspaper for inciting to sedition.

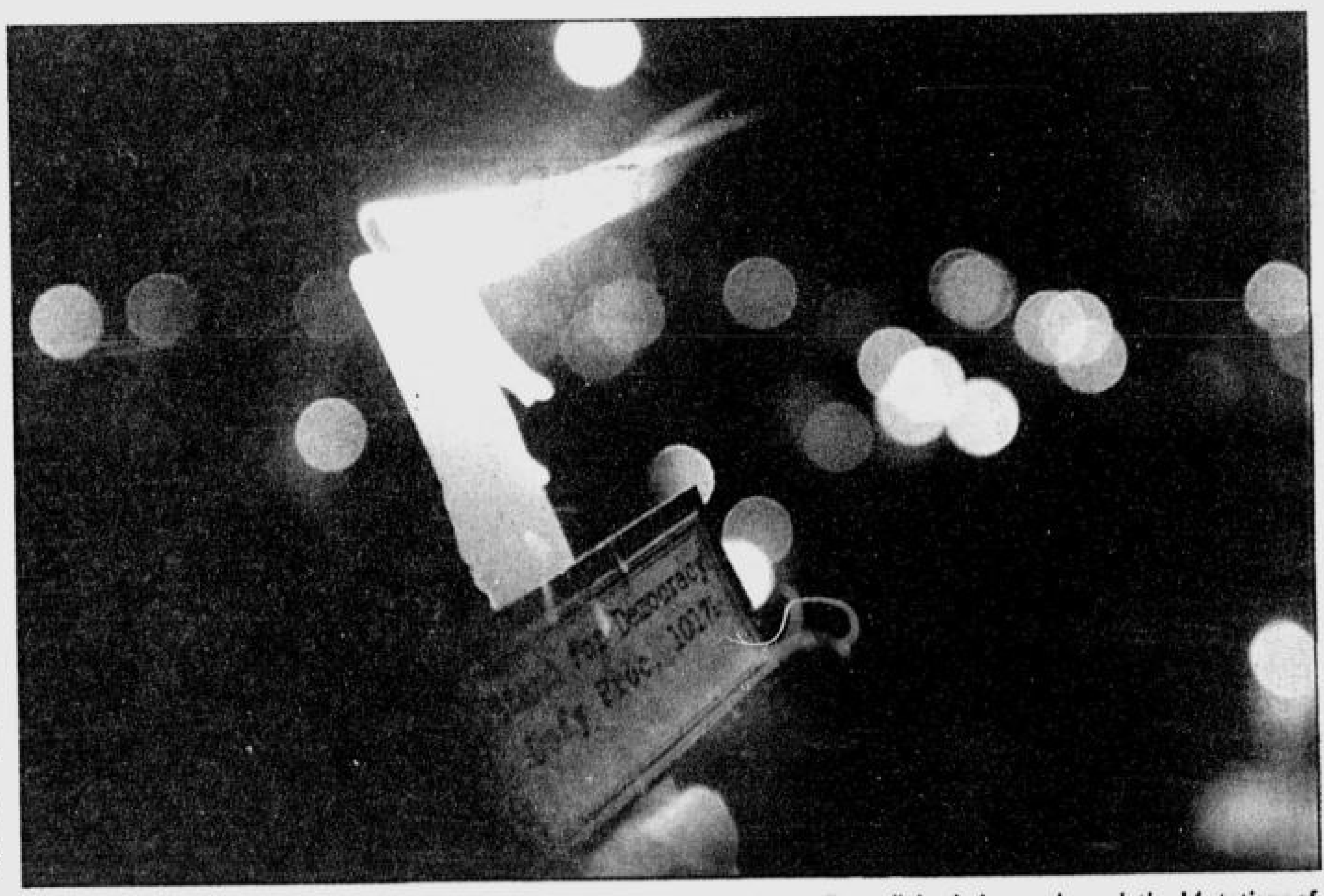
Charged at the Department of Justice were Ninez Cacho-Olivares, editor-in-chief and publisher of the Daily Tribune, and two of its columnists, Ike Señeres and Herman Tiu-Laurel.

Among the evidence submitted to the DOJ were copies of their columns that allegedly contained seditious remarks, according to an officer of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region.

The police's Directorate for Investigation has been reading their columns, and found "seditious statements" on them, the officer said.

"I'm not surprised," said Olivares, who said

CRACKDOWN/ A8



THE FIGHT GOES ON: Anti-1017 protesters, and what it stood for, light candles to light their way through the 14 stations of the cross during the staging of the Kalbaryo ng Bayan (Nation's Calvary) at the La Salle Green Hills on Thursday. EDWIN BACASMAS

House-bound Batasan 5 still considered under arrest

By Norman Bordadora

THE MILITANT "BATASAN FIVE" CONGRESSMEN yesterday downplayed the lifting of the state of emergency, saying there was no reason for them to be complacent for as long as the threats of arrest hanged over their heads.

"If (the administration) would say that we'd no longer be arrested once we leave the House of Representatives, then we may start to believe that the situation is already normal," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said at a news conference.

Casiño and fellow Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo and Joel Virador, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza have been holed up inside the House complex for six days, enjoying protective custody in the face of a police threat to arrest them on charges of rebellion.

"As long as its constitutionality has yet to be decided, we can never be complacent," Ocampo said, referring to Proclamation No. 1017, which President Macapagal-Arroyo rescinded yesterday.

Ocampo said the administration could always restore the emergency when it deemed fit.

A spokesperson for the Philippine Na-

HOUSE-BOUND/ A19

Closure rites end search, start healing in St. Bernard

By Joey A. Gabieta, Jani Arnaiz and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau
and Volt Contreras

GUINSAUGON, ST. BERNARD, Southern Leyte—With the defaced Mt. Kan-abag as backdrop, a memorial service was held yesterday, 15 days after killer mudslides wiped out this farming village.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias, in an emotional speech, asked survivors of the tragedy "to accept God's will without question."

"We did everything possible. But now is the time for acceptance. Let us help each other and let us hold each other now that we may be able to rise from this difficult situation," she said during the four-hour ceremony.

The rites were held at the edge of the buried village that witnessed the death of 152 of its residents with over 900 people still missing and presumed dead.

CLOSURE/ A20

NPA land mine kills 2 cops in Puerto Galera

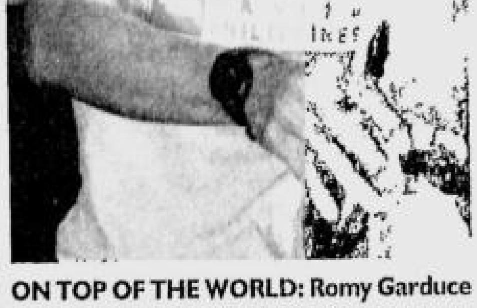
By Luige A. del Puerto, Marlon Ramos, Delfin Mallari Jr. and Marciano Virola Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

APPARENTLY STEPPING UP THEIR OFFENSIVE in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's emergency declaration, communist rebels yesterday exploded a land mine and killed two police officers and a civilian in the resort town of Puerto Galera.

Three other policemen were wounded in the 6 a.m. attack carried out by 20 New People's Army guerrillas in Oriental Mindoro, police said.

Philippine National Police spokesperson

NPA/ A19



ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Romy Garduce leaves for Nepal on Friday. JESS YUSON

Veteran climber seeks to be 1st Pinoy on Everest

By Nikko Dizon

ACCOMPLISHED MOUNTAINEER ROMEO "Romi" Garduce left yesterday for Nepal on a quest to become the first Filipino to conquer Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain peak.

Garduce is making the climb to test his limits, to benefit a charity and to instill national pride.

"I guess it's part of self-discovery. I keep on challenging myself," Garduce told reporters when asked why he embarked on such an ambitious goal.

He added: "This is the fourth time I am doing a Climb-for-a-Cause. Our countrymen can support my climb by donating to charity, by making a pledge every thousand feet."

Garduce was in high spirits as he prepared to check in for his Thai Airways flight that would take him to Nepal via Bangkok.

"My bags already weigh 40 kilograms!" he exclaimed, laughing, as he tried to figure out where to put the extra pairs of socks, videocam films, brochures and other paraphernalia that his sponsors had given him.

Asked by the INQUIRER when he plans to return to the Philippines, Garduce replied in jest: "Me or my body?"

"My climb could either be successful or *kapalit nito ang buhay ko*(it could mean my life)," he said.

The thirtysomething systems analyst had mixed feelings about his Everest climb.

"*Para kang sundalo na ipapadala sa giyera* (You're like a soldier being sent off to war). I

VETERAN/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/03/03/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

No free speech for soldiers – Cruz

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SOLDIERS HAVE NO RIGHT TO "FREE SPEECH" for as long as they carry guns, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said yesterday.

He also dared disgruntled soldiers to resign before making their sentiments known.

Cruz's challenge came after three senior military officials were implicated in a plan by some officers to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"A soldier is given the right by the government to carry a gun but in exchange he surrenders his right to free speech," Cruz said in a news conference in Camp Aguinaldo right after Ms Arroyo announced the lifting of the national emergency proclamation.

"If you want to join politics, you have to give up your gun. You can not be carrying a gun and joining politics at the same time," Cruz added.

"Give up your gun and resign from the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] before you join political discussions. But as long as you are a member of the military and you carry a gun, you surrender your right to air your sentiments," went on Cruz, a lawyer who is only the third civilian to head the defense department in the last three decades.

Cruz also vowed that the military would prosecute "habitual delinquents" who violate their oath of loyalty to the chain of command.

Brig. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin, founders of the Young Officers Union that staged the 1989 coup d'etat against the Aquino administration, were relieved as commander of the First Scout Rangers Regiment and the First Marine Brigade, respectively for reportedly planning to join anti-Arroyo rallies at Edsa last week.

Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda was also unceremoniously relieved as Marine commandant for allegedly failing to keep his men in check.

As of yesterday, there has been no clear pronouncement that Lim and Querubin would be subjected to court martial.

Cruz said the military leadership is bent on letting the military justice system take its course against all erring officers.

He said Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga has formed a fact-finding body to investigate Lim and Querubin, who led a standoff at the Marines headquarters in Fort Bonifacio last Sunday to protest Miranda's relief.

"The leadership of the AFP and the DND [Department of National Defense] is not having second thoughts about letting the military justice system take its course because this will not end if we do not let the military justice system ... go to work," said Cruz.

"We will deal with those habitual delinquents who do not respect the Constitution under the military justice system," he added.

He said this administration would not give rebel soldiers amnesty as was extended by the Ramos administration to those who staged a series of bloody coup d'etat against the Aquino administration.

ERIK ARAZAS/ EDWIN BACASMAS

AND IT CAME TO PASS
Last week, the military barricaded the Palace using empty container vans, at left. After President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted Presidential Proclamation 1017, cars are back on the street leading to Malacañang.

Use of gov't funds in LP convention hit; DILG exec defends memo

By TJ Burgonio
and Norman Bordadora

ALREADY ACCUSED OF HOLDING a rump session on the alleged instigation of Malacañang, a faction of the Liberal Party led by Manila Mayor Atienza came under fire yesterday for using government funds in Thursday's LP convention and election at the posh Manila Hotel.

"The use of government funds for a partisan political activity, a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the LP, is against the law," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, an LP senator, said in a briefing.

Biazon disclosed that Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus exhorted LP governors and mayors to attend the LP conference on decentralization set for March 2 and authorized them to use their own funds for such purpose.

According to Biazon, Memorandum Circular No. 2006-10 was issued on Feb. 13 by Corpus, who said that the transportation fare, hotel bill and registration fees of the participants would be charged against local funds.

But Corpus yesterday told the INQUIRER that the memorandum circular was not irregular and partisan.

"So what? There's nothing wrong with that," Corpus said in a telephone interview.

Corpus said the memorandum that he signed was merely ministerial.

"It was just (granting a request) to attend the conference on official time. We also allowed them to use public funds except for the 20 percent development fund or the poverty alleviation fund," Corpus said.

"We also told them that their expenses should be charged to their 2006 local fund," he added.

The LP conference which turned into a convention and an election eventually ousted Senate President Franklin Drilon as LP president. Atienza was voted party president while Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor was named party chair.

Drilon's faction said it was studying the option of expelling party members who attended the "rump session." "All options are being discussed," Drilon said.

"We have to say that these are acts inimical to the party interests and ultimately will have to be subjected to disciplinary action," former DepEd Secretary Florencio Abad said in an interview Thursday night.

But Drilon did not close the doors to any future dialogue with Atienza's "breakaway group."

"I've always been open to a dialogue. Two of those who attended the convention have been trying to open a dialogue between us, but it was Mayor Atienza who was resisting it," he said.

Drilon had branded Thursday's proceedings as "brazenly illegal," pointing out that Atienza, as party chair, had no authority to convene the National Executive Council and that only 32 out of the 103 Neco members attended the convention. *With reports from Tina G. Santos and Christine O. Avendaño*

'Our son is not a communist'

CALL HIM ANYTHING but never a communist.

Barred from speaking with the media since he was recaptured on Feb. 21, Oakwood mutineer, 1Lt. Lawrence San Juan, finally managed to slip an opinion under tight military security.

His parents Rodolfo and Melanie yesterday denied that their son ever planned to join forces with communist insurgents in a purported attempt to overthrow the Arroyo administration.

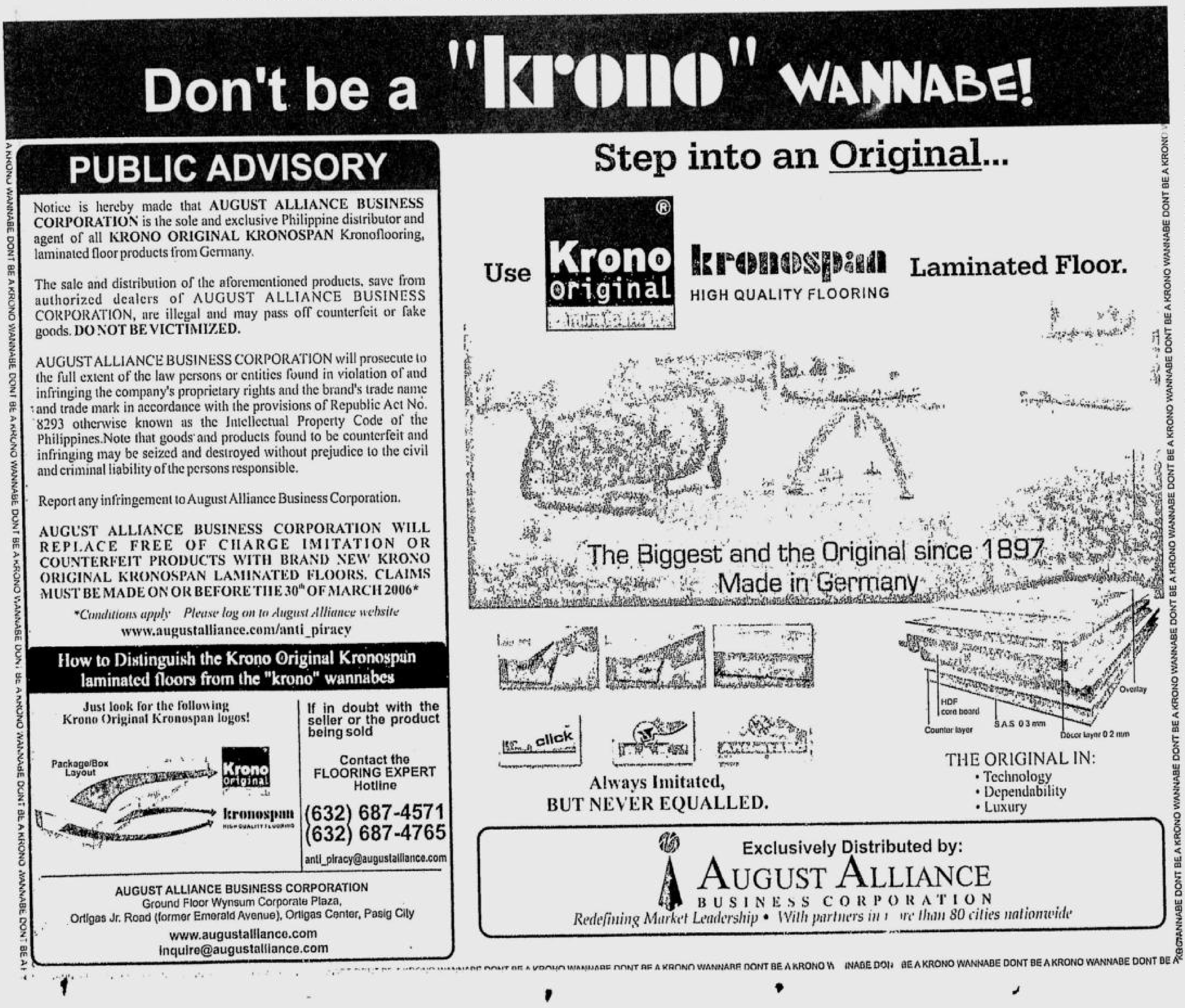
"No, he can't do anything like that. It's never in his character," the 56-year-old mother, a public school teacher, swore in an interview.

Rodolfo, 65, said his son was probably as straight as any military man could get and as such, had no tendencies to embrace the enemy.

A devout Catholic, the 32-year-old soldier even had a rosary in his pocket when he was recaptured in a police checkpoint in Barangay San Felipe, Batangas nearly two weeks ago, he said.

It was a practice San Juan brought with him since his high school days at Marist School in Marikina where he graduated in 1989, the father explained.

Christian V. Esguerra



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Campaign vs big-time smugglers has no funding, BOC tells Senate

By Leila B. Salaverria

IS GOVERNMENT SERIOUS IN THE campaign to nail down big-time smugglers?

Bureau of Customs Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo said lack of logistics has hampered investigations into the activities of suspected smugglers named in a recent senate hearing.

Templo, who heads the intelligence division, said he had asked for an outlay of P500,000 from Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales to finance the field work of his men, but was told the bureau has no funds.

The amount was to be used by agents to conduct surveillance operations and acquire communication equipment, said Templo.

"How can I conduct an investigation? We want to follow up the places to watch their actions, but we don't even have radios," he said.

Morales, however, said he has been scouting around for funds for the investigation.

He also said he would appeal to the Senate to approve the BOC's proposed budget.

In a recent hearing, senators directed Morales to investigate smuggling activities in the BOC which were allegedly spearheaded by people close to the President's family.

Without logistics, Templo said he and his legal team had resorted to just checking the records of the suspected smugglers named in a Senate hearing.

He said the team found no derogatory records on the suspects in the BOC, the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group or the military's intelligence service.

But Templo stressed that this was just the initial phase of the investigation.

He said the BOC still has to check the actual activities of the people on the list or of their companies.

"That is not the final report. The final report will be released after the follow-up investigation," he said.

Templo said among the people included for background checking were Vicky Toh, Sammy Lee and Lucio Lao Co. Toh and Co allegedly have close ties to the first family.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has earlier ordered finance and customs officials to go after the people who drop the name of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to facilitate their dealings with the BOC.

Japan gives P27.5M to build homes for Leyte slide victims

TOKYO — JAPAN WILL DONATE US$535,715 (P27,417,893) to the Philippines to build shelters for people who lost their homes in a killer landslide that struck a village in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte last month, the Foreign Ministry said Friday.

The aid comes on top of previous donations of tents and blankets and the dispatch of several disaster recovering teams.

"Those who have lost their houses and properties in the landslide disaster area are now forced to stay in a seriously harmful situation without clear prospects for the future," the Foreign Ministry said in a release.

On Thursday, Philippine authorities officially ended the search for bodies in the village of Guinsaugon, which was entombed by a wall of mud, boulders and trees from the collapse of a nearby mountainside on Feb. 17.

About 140 bodies have been retrieved, and 972 people are still missing and feared dead. More than 3,000 were left homeless. *AFP*

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A matter of 'national security,' says Cruz

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

CLAIMING IT WAS A MATTER OF "national security," Defense Security Avelino Cruz Jr. said it was solely up to President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide whether to make public the findings of a fact-finding body on the military's alleged involvement in rigging the 2004 elections.

The usually unflappable Cruz, a lawyer by profession, yesterday nearly lost his cool at reporters who asked why the report submitted by the former Armed Forces Inspector General and now the Navy chief, Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga months ago has not been released.

The "Hello Garci" scandal is believed to be at the crux of the unrest in the military after the alleged wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and ex-elections commissioner Virgilio Garcillano gave rise to allegations of election cheating involving top military officials.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former military chief, said Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin who reportedly planned to withdraw support from the President during the weekend were among the officers who came to see him last July 2 protesting the inaction of the AFP top brass on those officials implicated in the scandal.

The issue of election fraud was also raised during the six-hour standoff at the Marines headquarters Sunday sparked by the sudden relief of Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

SNEAK PREVIEW

Palace video shows 'left-right' conspiracy

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG HAS PRODUCED and was expected to show on nationwide television last night a short video documentary disclosing what it claimed was a conspiracy among elements from the right, left and the opposition to overthrow the Arroyo government.

The 12.5-minute documentary was scheduled to be aired at 7 p.m. last night over government television station NBN 4 but Malacañang reporters were given a "sneak preview" yesterday.

The Palace felt compelled to present its case in the documentary after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the state of national emergency yesterday, a week after its imposition Feb. 24.

"We want people to be enlightened about what's happening in the country, about what happened last Friday and Sunday, and the continued conspiracy between the left and the right," the President's Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said after the showing of the documentary at the Palace press briefing room.

President Arroyo declared a state of national emergency after military officials disclosed they had taken under custody Gen. Danilo Lim of the Scout Ranger Regiment who had planned to march with his unit to the Edsa 1 commemoration rallies as part of a plot to overthrow the government.

Two days later, a military standoff gripped Manila in suspense and tension after 1st Marine Brigade commander Col. Ariel Querubin and his men milled around the Philippine Marines headquarters in Makati City in protest over the relief of Marine commandant Gen. Miranda. Violence was averted and the confrontation resolved in favor of the government after seven hours, with authorities turning away politicians and other groups attempting to replicate a "people power" gathering.

In lifting the state of emergency, the President apparently was persuaded by the assessment of her security officials that threat to the national security had subsided.

Defensor said the production and showing of the documentary was recommended by the National Security Council, and that additionally, the Palace wanted to take a "proactive role to campaign strongly against the communist movement."

"What's important here is for the people to see the potential trouble that this kind of alliance would create and the continued campaign of the government against the left and the adventurist right," he told reporters.

Present in the showing of the documentary were Defensor, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Genoroso Senga, Navy chief Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

The documentary related that Senga and Army chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon were the ones who disclosed the alleged conspiracy of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army and the mutinous Magdalo Group of military officers to oust President Arroyo.

It revealed the participation in the conspiracy of Lim, Querubin as well as former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, whom the military identified as "alias Bitoy" and who had met with communist rebels to forge the alliance.

The documentary showed Esperon explaining that Honasan, who helped recruit Magdalo members, had praised and thanked communist rebels for agreeing to an alliance after two and a half years.

According to the footage, the groups met for the first time Nov. 10 last year when they agreed to plan the stages which would lead to the ousting of the government. The last meeting was held on Feb. 22, the documentary said, and that the plot called for the involvement of "students, professionals and even members of the Church."

AFP CHIEF of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita watch with members of the Palace press the showing Friday of "Paglaban sa Kataksilan 1017," a documentary prepared by Malacañang.

LYN RILLON

I'll quit if GMA is tied to fertilizer scam – PGAC chair

By Nelson F. Flores

PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-GRAFT Commission Chair Constancia de Guzman said yesterday she would resign from her post if investigations showed that President Macapagal-Arroyo was involved in the alleged multi-million peso fertilizer scam.

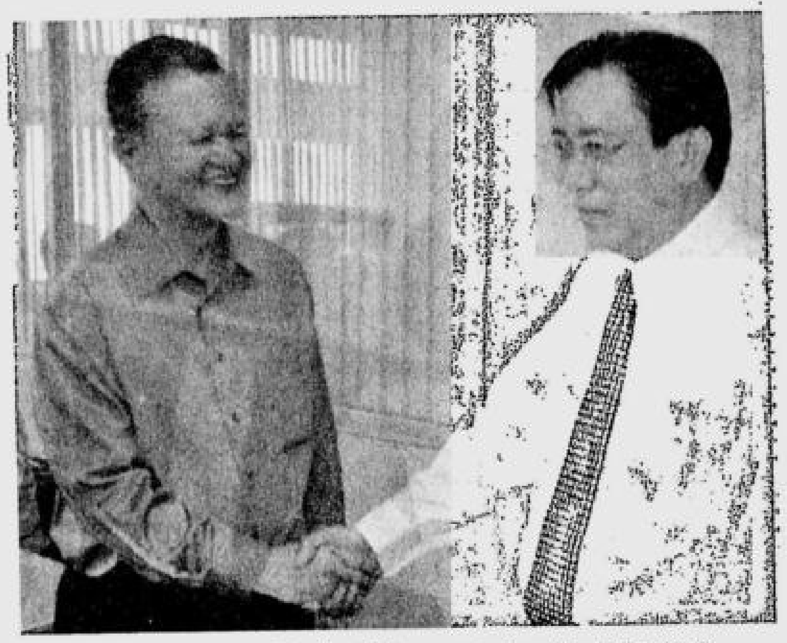
In a press conference, De Guzman said she believes in Ms Arroyo's integrity and dedication to work having known the President when she was with the Department of Trade and Industry.

De Guzman, an Arroyo appointee, said the commission was conducting a "no holds barred" investigation of the scam. She added that a team of seasoned and trained PAGC investigators had been assigned to the undertaking.

"The team has 90 days to undertake the necessary investigative process that would ensure a credible fact-finding job. It is expected to submit its recommendations by May this year," she said.

"The case could be dropped because of the absence of irregularities, or a recommendation could be issued dismissing those found to have committed acts violating the law on plunder and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act," De Guzman explained.

The recommendation for dismissal, the PAGC chair said, would be accompanied by the "imposition of accessory penalties like the forfeiture of financial benefits, cancellation of eligibility and perpetual disqualification to hold office."



FORMER congressman Peping Cojuangco tells acting NBI chief Nestor Mantaring he was not involved in a recent plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

PDI PHOTO

Peping goes to NBI, denies part in coup plot

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FORMER TARLAC CONGRESSman Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday denied that there was a plot to launch a coup d' etat during a gathering at his Dasmariñas home last Feb. 24.

In a letter addressed to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno last Feb. 27 which he also submitted to National Bureau of Investigation officer in charge Nestor Mantaring, Cojuangco said: "There was a gathering. There was an effort to gather information. There were expressions of concern. But definitely, there was no plotting."

Cojuangco appeared at the NBI yesterday after he was invited to shed light on the Time Asia magazine article implicating him and Council on Philippine Affairs (COPA) secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon in a foiled coup plot last week.

The chair of the Philippine Olympic Committee said he invited Saycon and a few other people to finalize plans for the Feb. 25 dinner that he would be hosting in commemoration of the People Power Revolution.

In his letter, Cojuangco said they were also supposed to discuss the Gawad Kalinga event that would honor the Philippine medalists during the recent Southeast Asian Games.

He explained that both he and Saycon received concerned phone calls asking about "coup plots in the offing" when the meeting began.

While Saycon took the initiative to check out the reports, Cojuangco said he suggested that the callers drop by his residence so he "could share" with them "any information that would come his way."

Cojuangco said that at one point during the gathering, Saycon advised him and the other visitors that he would be calling a certain Delta – who turned out to be Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

"I remember the voice at the other end saying that there was nothing definite but that he would advise Mr. Saycon if he learned anything more," Cojuangco said, explaining that Saycon had turned on the speaker device of his cell phone so that everyone would hear what Lim had to say.

The former congressman said the visitors started to thin out after "no further information could be gathered that evening."

As for Time Asia correspondent Nelly Sindayen, Cojuangco confirmed she was present during the meeting.

"She was there as Saycon's guest," he said.

Mantaring told reporters that they were able to confirm with Cojuangco that there was indeed a gathering on Feb. 23.

"He said that aside from preparing for the People Power dinner and the Gawad Kalinga event, he also met with a group of cockfighters that night," Mantaring said.

While Cojuangco promptly responded to the NBI's invitation, Saycon declined to do so, opting to give a letter of explanation which he earlier submitted to Puno.

"Considering the chilling effect of the declaration of state of emergency, Mr. Saycon deemed it prudent and wise to decline your invitation since this kind of invitation is reminiscent of the martial law type [of invitation] that he experienced during the martial law regime," Saycon's lawyer Marc Anthony Antonio said in a letter to Mantaring.

Corrections

IN THE STORY "Nañagas quits as DBP prexy" on Page B2 of yesterday's issue, Vitaliano Nañagas II was wrongly identified as president of the Development Bank of the Philippines. He is chairman of the DBP.

* * *

IN THE Feb. 27 issue, a story on Page B2-1—"Déjà vu on Ayala"—misstated the date of burial of former Sen. Benigno Aquino. Aquino was buried on Aug. 31, 1983—not 1986.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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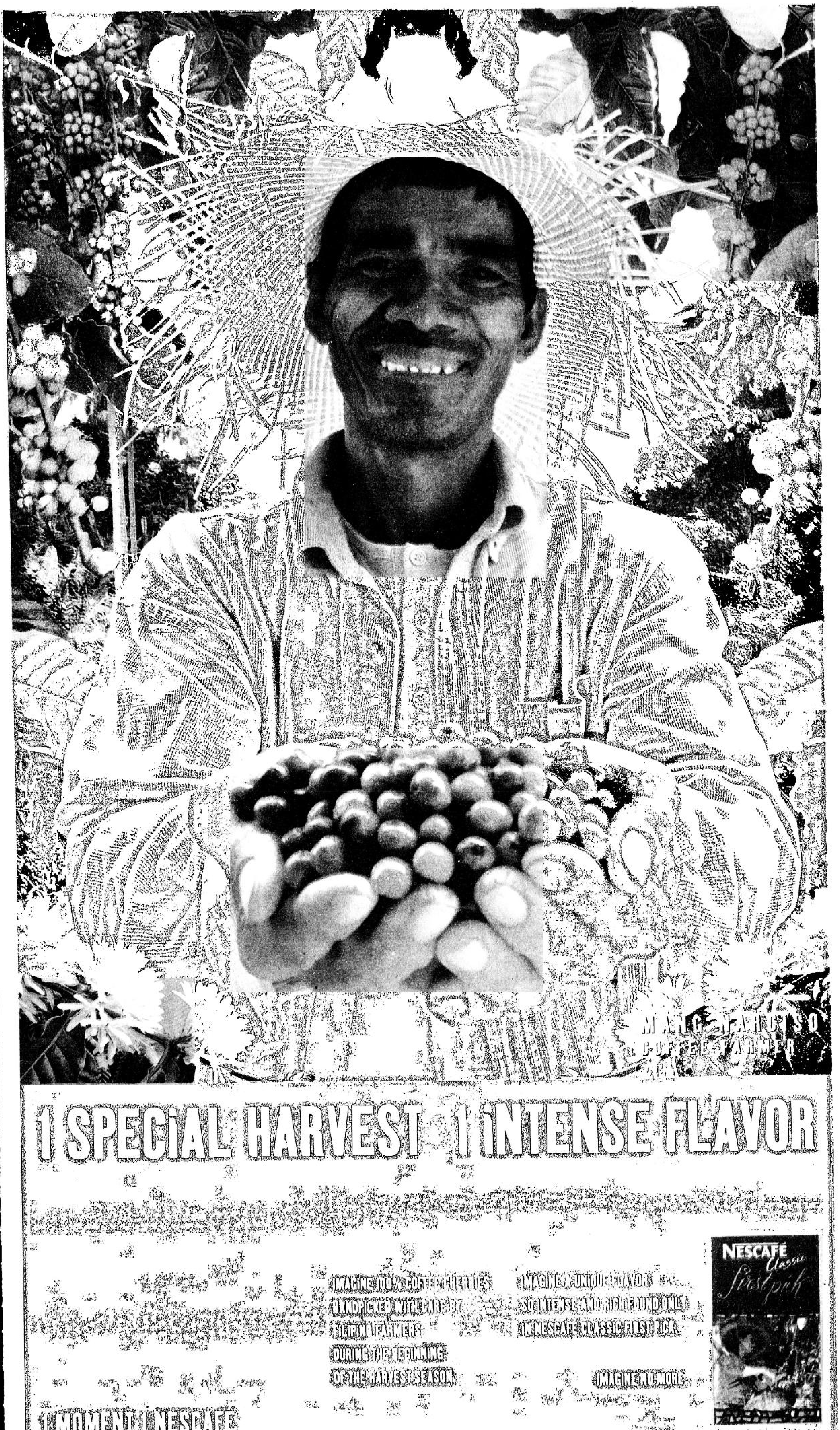

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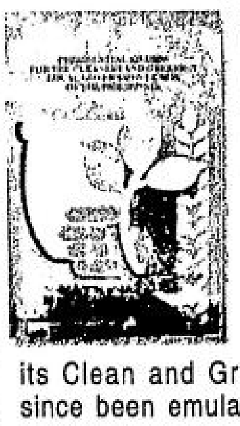
TAKING the lead through innovative and pioneering initiatives in protecting and conserving the environment, rehabilitating damaged and ravaged natural resources and striking a balance in the utilization and propagation of its land, water and coastal resources through a dynamic sustainable development policy, had earned Puerto Princesa City international and local recognition. All these could not have been possible without the wholehearted and strong support of its constituents and the dedicated and persevering efforts of city officials and employees, especially those manning the frontlines against forest, marine resource and wildlife destruction. Among those noteworthy achievements include the following:

The **F1RST** city to have made environmental protection as the centerpiece of local governance in line with its sustainable development objectives. Thus, earning the honor of being the FIRST local government unit in the country to receive the UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL 500 ROLL OF HONOR AWARD from UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell in Seoul, Korea during the World Environment Day celebration. For his pioneering spirit, dedication and commitment in making environmental protection and sustainable development the nucleus of his administration Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn was the FIRST Filipino political leader to receive the award.

The **F1RST** city to receive the GRAND MACLI-ING DULAG ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS given by the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) and the Rotary Club of Makati. Puerto Princesa City was chosen as the most environmentally-conscious and active LGU at the time.

The **F1RST** component city to receive the AWARD OF EXCELLENCE AS THE CLEANEST AND GREENEST COMPONENT CITY IN THE PHILIPPINES (1994) and the NATIONAL HALL OF FAME AWARD (1996) for winning the "Cleanest and Greenest Component City Award" for three consecutive years (1994-96). The city's innovative approach under its Clean and Green program has since been emulated by other local government units.



The **F1RST** LGU to receive the prestigious DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AWARD OF ASIA by the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in cooperation with the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Management Association of the Philippines.

On its 134th Founding Anniversary

Puerto Princesa City

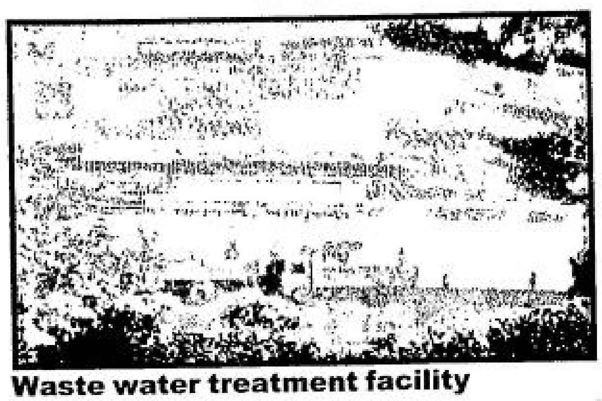
inaugurates RP's first integrated sanitary landfill and waste water treatment facility

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY marks today its 134th foundation day with the inauguration of the country's first state-of-the-art, integrated sanitary landfill and waste water treatment facility that is owned and operated by a local government unit.

Located in Barangay Santa Lourdes, the sanitary landfill and waste water treatment project sits in a 35 hectare environmentally-controlled area which was once an abandoned mining site. The pioneering and innovative project was jointly undertaken with financial support extended by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

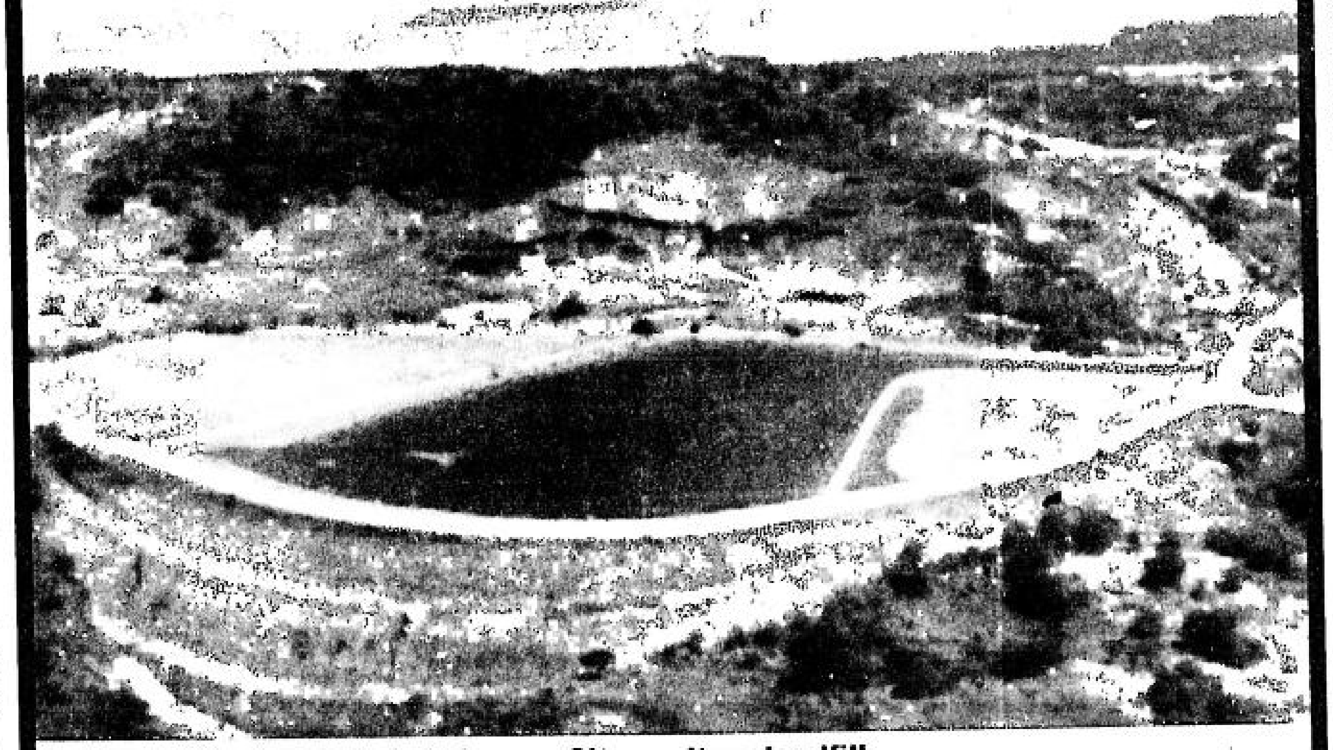
The P300-million state-of-the art solid waste landfill and waste water treatment project is the first to fully comply with Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act of 2003.

Mayor Edward S.Hagedorn said "the city government and the people of Puerto Princesa City are very happy to be inaugurating today such a landmark environmental protection and conservation facility. It is a fitting tribute to the 134th Foundation Day of our beloved city."



Waste water treatment facility

"This project took years to plan and implement. It represents the foresight, forward planning, commitment and perseverance of a local government unit and its constituents who are committed to protect, conserve, rehabilitate sustain and develop its finite natural resources for future generations to come," Hagedorn said.

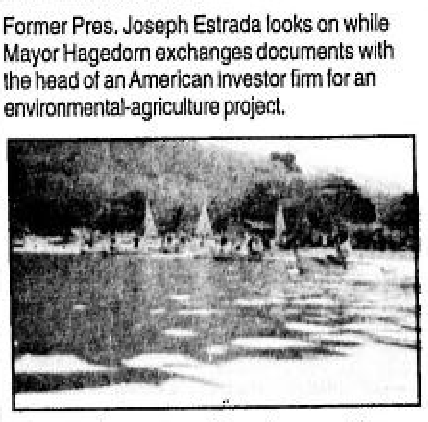


Bird's eye view of Puerto Princesa City sanitary landfill

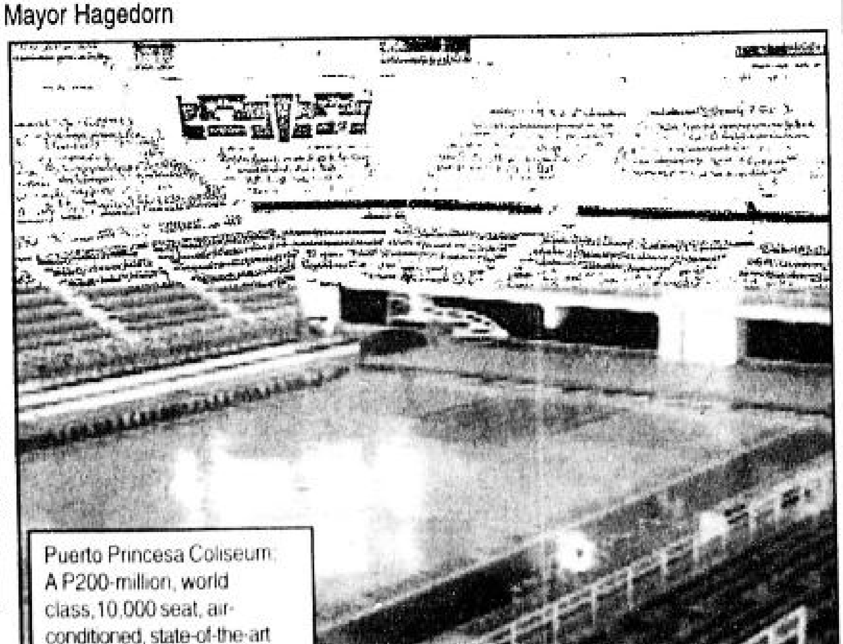
Mayor Hagedorn receiving Galing Pook Award from former Pres. Fidel V. Ramos

Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo presents the DBP Environment Excellence Award to Mayor Hagedorn

Former Pres. Joseph Estrada looks on while Mayor Hagedorn exchanges documents with the head of an American investor firm for an environmental-agriculture project.

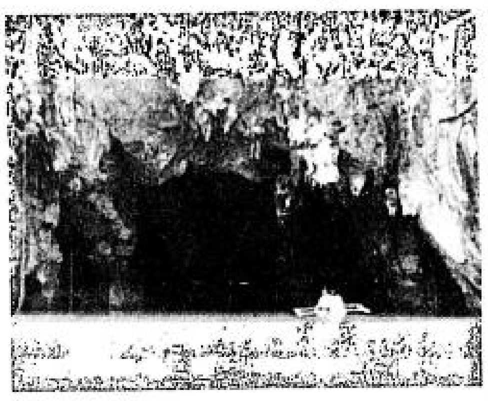


Pista ng Karagatan - One of many native celebrations which lures international and local tourists to the city

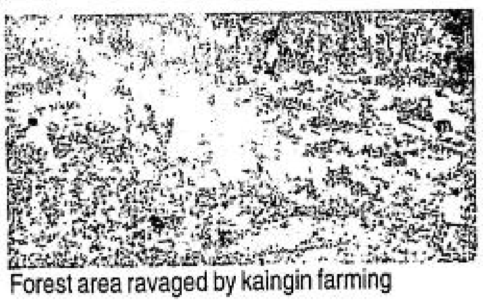


Puerto Princesa Coliseum: A P200-million, world class,10,000 seat, air-conditioned, state-of-the-art equipped multi-purpose facility.

The **F1RST** LGU to be given management control and authority over a national park – the Saint Paul Subterrenean River National Park (the world's longest underground river) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. After six years of local government management and control, the national park was renamed PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRENEAN RIVER NATIONAL PARK and was named by the UNESCO as a World Heritage site.



The **F1RST** LGU outside of Metro Manila to establish and maintain a Cyanide Detection Test Laboratory to prevent cyanide fishing which permanently destroys precious coral reefs which support marine life and ensure that no fish or marine products caught through the illegal use of sodium cyanide is sold to the public. This facility has enabled the city to stop once rampant, organized illegal trade in of live tropical fishes.



Forest area ravaged by kaingin farming

The **F1RST** LGU to declare a STATE OF CALAMITY which paved the way for the passage of Republic Act 8185, which gives authority to LGUs to declare a state of calamity should the need arises. Mayor Edward Hagedorn early on his term issued a State of Calamity in the city in order to eradicate rampant *kaingin* or slash and burn farming that had destroyed and denuded large tracts of virgin forests in the city. Through the unprecedented legal move, Mayor Hagedorn undertook a holistic program that weaned away *kaingin* farmers from their illegal and destructive practices and turned them into enlightened, productive farmers under the city's agricultural and farming support programs.

The **F1RST** LGU to develop and implement a comprehensive and intensive reforestation program within all watersheds in its jurisdiction. As a result, Puerto Princesa City is the first LGU to have distinction of being given authority and control over national watersheds by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). With control and authority over watersheds under the city government, the city has since launched a series of highly successful innovative reforestation programs like its annual *Pista Y Ang Kageban* or Feast of the Forests to replant denuded watersheds in the city and its "Love Affair with Nature" program every Valentine's Day to replant, propagate and expand its mangrove stock in coastal barangays. To date, the city has replanted a total of 1.5 million trees and protected and significantly expanded the hectarage of its threatened and diminishing mangrove plantations through the years.

" Protect what is there, rehabilitate what has been destroyed and plan for intelligent, sustainable resource utilization." **– MAYOR EDWARD S. HAGEDORN**

Saudi prince pardons 50 Pinays held in jail for minor offenses

By Jerome Aning

FIFTY FILIPINAS IN SAUDI ARABIAN JAILS for minor offenses have been granted royal pardon and would be repatriated to the Philippines in two weeks, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas disclosed yesterday.

Sto. Tomas, who was in Saudi Arabia last weekend, said the governor of Riyadh Province, Prince Salman bin Abul Aziz, approved the pardons as a gesture of goodwill to the Arroyo administration and the Philippine celebration of the National Women's Month.

Sto. Tomas said 14 other overseas Filipino workers serving time in Kuwaiti jails have also been pardoned and freed late February during the emirate's celebration of its liberation from Iraqi invading forces during the First Gulf War.

The OFWs were serving prison terms for cultural offenses, such as bringing in religious articles, possession of alcoholic drink, and "love crimes," the labor secretary told reporters.

Last January, Salman granted amnesty to dozens of OFWs detained at Riyadh's airport for violation of the kingdom's immigration laws. The prince also paid for the trip back to the Philippines.

At least 350 more OFWs are languishing in Saudi Arabia jails for other crimes.

Japanese travel execs to visit RP

By Jerome Aning

TOP EXECUTIVES OF JAPAN'S BIG TRAVEL firms will arrive in Manila this month as the Department of Tourism intensifies its campaign to attract more Japanese tourists, the number of which has been overtaken by South Koreans in the past months.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said Eiju Abe of Kamome Tours and Yasuhiro Yamazaki of Royce Confect Co. Ltd., together with wholesale agents and media representatives will be in the country by mid-March.

Abe and Yokohama municipal board members will be in Manila on Mar. 28-29, while Yamazaki will visit Manila and Cebu on Mar. 15-25.

Durano said the DOT promotion drive in Japan will be tapping golfers, drivers and war memorial visitors to boost tourist arrivals.

At least 115 Japanese will comprise the KNT Izokukai tour group who will visit war memorial sites all over the Philippines from Mar. 2-5. They will travel to Tacloban, Davao, Cebu, Subic, Clark, Bataan, and Corregidor.

Likewise, 10 wholesale travel agents and media representatives from Tokyo are scheduled for a familiarization tour of El Nido and Manila on Mar. 3-6, focusing on activities that can be included in their sales packages.

A group of 10 top-level wholesale executives will be treated to a golf familiarization tour in Davao on Mar. 10-12.

"All of them will market our tourism destinations, products and services in Japan," Durano said, noting the slow but consistent increase of Japanese arrivals to the Philippines since 2004.

The number of tourist arrivals from Japan, which used to be the Philippines' number one market aside from the United States, has been surpassed in the past two years by South Korea.

DOT's January data showed that Japan has slid to third among the country's top 12 markets, with only 41,014 visitors compared to Korea's 58,583 and the US' 53,225. In terms of growth rate, Japanese arrivals posted only 12.5 percent compared to Korea's 29.8 percent and US' 8.6 percent.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 4, 2006
Saturday, After Ash Wednesday
Casimir

1st Reading: 58:9-14
Gospel: Luke 5:27-32

Jesus noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office, he said to him, "Follow me." So Levi, leaving everything, got up and followed Jesus.

Levi gave a great feast for Jesus, and many tax collectors came to his house and took their place at table with the other people. Then the Pharisees and their fellow teachers complained to Jesus' disciples, "How is it that you eat and drink with tax collectors and other sinners?" But Jesus spoke up, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I have come to call to repentance; I call sinners, not the righteous."

Commentary

Isaiah is clear about the practices of Lent: no lying, no malicious speech, bestow (gift) the hungry with your bread, and satisfy the afflicted, giving what they lack. Then we will know the presence of God as light, guidance, strength, and as what waters us deeply. We will all be rebuilt and restored. But we must truly worship and make every day—not only the Sabbath—a day that is holy. We are sinners, all of us, like Matthew the tax collector, but we are invited home. We are called to stop being self-righteous and disobedient, and turn our hearts and lives towards the Body of Christ, the children of God, and follow Jesus as we once promised at our baptism. Together we must walk Lent behind the Crucified One.

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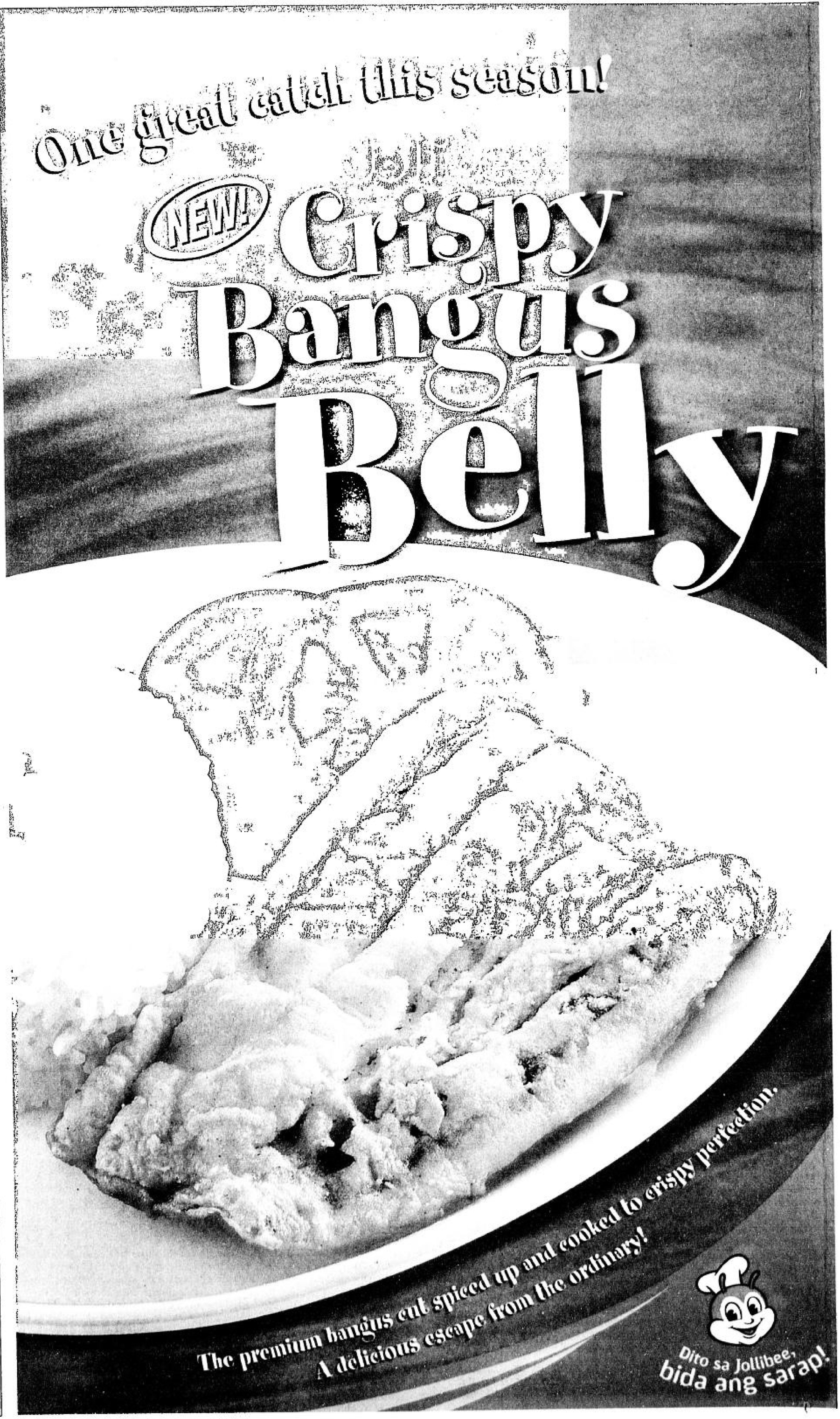
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GMA lifts state of emergency but …

From page A1

while the general public may relax with the lifting of PP 1017, the administration's enemies may not.

"It's a message to everyone that we can all relax and get on with our lives," Puno said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

"But the [Department of Interior and Local Government] and the [Philippine National Police] will remain vigilant because while the threat to the government has been resolved, there are still continuing threats to public order and safety from misguided elements in society," he said.

"We should also remind everyone that the laws against rebellion and sedition continue to be in force," he added.

US pressure

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said it was pressure from the US government that led Ms Arroyo to lift PP 1017.

Pimentel said the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill might have made the President do it, as well as the statement of the American Chamber of Commerce calling for an end to emergency rule.

He said the United States wanted things to go back to normal so that businesses would not be too affected.

"[PP] 1017 is bad for business. How can good business flourish in a state of emergency? This is realpolitik. Obviously, she's trying to please America, knowing the tremendous clout it exercises in this country," Pimentel said, adding:

"Gloria is a straw lady of the Americans."

The US Embassy in Manila, through press attaché Matthew Lussenhop, said that it "welcome[d]" the President's declaration and that it was now "look[ing] forward to a deeper cooperation" with the Philippine government on various bilateral concerns.

Reached on the phone shortly after PP 1021 was issued, Lussenhop declined to comment on perceptions that Ms Arroyo's meeting on Tuesday with Hill might have influenced her into ending emergency rule, which the US Embassy said it had been "closely monitoring."

Lussenhop said the embassy had nothing more to add to statements made by Hill, who maintained that the US government regarded the political crisis as something Filipinos could resolve by themselves in a democratic context.

Success

The President claimed success in fixing the economy, which she said was the reason for her election.

She appealed to her "political opponents and opportunists to stop undermining our economy at home and embarrassing the nation abroad with their cheap political antics."

She said the events in the last seven days had validated her "judgment call" to declare a state of emergency and implement it for one week even though her economic advisers had told her to lift it as early as Saturday and Sunday last week.

"My concerns were subsequently borne out: We have arrested scores of destabilizers and several military personnel. We have documented case by case and in specific detail the transgressions for which they now stand accused. And as you saw play out last Sunday night, the struggle continued through the weekend. As such, I kept in place the SOE (state of emergency) until I was sure the nation was safe and sound," she said.

Ms Arroyo took pains to justify her decision, saying she empathized with those who were spooked by the warrantless arrests and the perceived crackdown on the media.

"It was not an action I took lightly, but I felt too much was at stake to do anything less," she said.

Thanks

"I believe my actions strengthened and protected our civil liberties and free press and maintained the economic gains we have fought so hard to secure. Our nation is stronger for dealing quickly and decisively with this issue," she added.

Ms Arroyo thanked the military for "withstanding the political gamesmanship," the local and national government leaders "who stood by the side of democracy," and the people "who understand that the best way to a bright future is through hard work, not taking to the streets."

She thanked the PNP and the Armed Forces for remaining loyal to the chain of command, adding that persons who had plotted to overthrow her administration would face the full force of the law.

At noon yesterday, the PNP further downgraded its alert level to normal alert, meaning the work of the 118,000-strong police force will again be governed by a three-shift system.

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, PNP spokesperson, also announced at a press conference the lifting of the suspension of the permit to carry firearms, a special privilege given to registered gun holders facing threats to their lives.

And in another sign that things were normalizing, the PNP said it would now be up to media organizations to police their own ranks, particularly on the issue of printing or airing what might be deemed "seditious remarks."

But troops deployed to television stations were not pulled out.

"Not at the moment. They still remain in place," said the spokesperson of the AFP's National Capital Region Command [NCRCom], Capt. Ramon Zagala.

"The troops will remain in place and we are still on red alert. We have recommended to higher authorities to downgrade it to blue alert, but the guidance is to remain in place," Zagala said.

Split decision

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez described as a "split decision" the outcome of Ms Arroyo's first serious bout with the media following the issuance of PP 1017 last Feb. 24.

After a week of implementing the edict that Sen. Joker Arroyo had said was directed at the media, Gonzalez said one of the lessons learned was that the media would fight it out even amid threat of arrest and the takeover and closure of media offices.

"The media will always fight for their own survival. You cannot remove the feeling of invulnerability," Gonzalez said in an interview following the lifting of PP 1017.

Still, Gonzalez—one of the framers of the controversial edict—said he believed that the government had succeeded in its objective to stop the media from supposedly allowing themselves to be used by antigovernment forces.

"I think it has some sobering effect," Gonzalez said when asked whether PP 1017 had been effective when applied to the media.

"Even the most critical media had started to reexamine their policies," he said, adding that PP 1017, like all laws, had the effect of "sowing fear" among the people.

Asked what prompted the Palace to withdraw the edict, Gonzalez said: "We lifted it at our own pleasure."

But he said that despite the lifting of PP 1017, the government would continue to monitor the media for grounds to press charges of inciting to sedition.

He said warrantless arrests, if done when a crime was committed, about to be committed or in pursuit of a fugitive from justice, would continue according to the basic laws of the land.

He said the same went for the prohibition of rallies without permits or those marred by violence.

Wolf under the bed

Gonzalez said the government was ready to reimpose a state of emergency when the need arose.

"We can always impose it tomorrow," he said.

For now, he said, the government would remain vigilant even if the situation seemed to have "simmered down."

"You lift this state of emergency and you all go to sleep?" he said. "We have to be more vigilant now. We may wake one morning with the wolf under our bed." *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Armand N. Nocum, Norman Bordadora, Philip C. Tubeza and Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Peso, financial markets euphoric over lifting of 1017

From page A1

2002. It was averaging 51.187 to the dollar at midday.

"The lifting of the state of emergency is a clear signal that the threats against the government have been neutralized more so this would boost financial markets, particularly the peso," said Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

But the formal lifting of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which was announced shortly before the equities market closed, failed to boost local stocks.

Traders said the market was due for a correction after four days of gains, as investors had taken account of the planned lifting of the state of emergency.

Share prices closed 0.34 percent lower Friday on profit-taking. The composite index slipped 7.24 points to 2,130.37.

On a roll

The peso had rallied for the fifth straight session after the weekend's political tension and gained another 4 centavos yesterday from Thursday's close of 51.22.

The local currency was also invigorated by the strengthening of Asian currencies, particularly the Japanese yen and Chinese yuan.

But news about two blasts in Pasig City before noon tempered the peso's further ascent. It slipped to 51.27 but rallied after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the emergency rule she imposed last week. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Traders, however, said the currency was still on a roll and could soon break the next psychological barrier at 51:$1.

"The peso is likely to test the 51:$1 levels as early as next week," Ravelas said.

Once the 51:$1 barrier was breached, Ravelas said the market would next target 50.50 against the greenback, especially in April and May when remittances from overseas Filipino workers pour in time for the schoolyear opening in June.

By the month's end, Ravelas said the peso would also benefit from the repatriation of residents' first quarter windfall from overseas investments.

Hot money

Strong inflows of "hot money" or foreign investments in local stocks, bonds and bank products starting February have also fueled the peso's rise against the US dollar.

Net portfolio investments hit an 11-month high of $515.3 million for the month of February, reversing the outflow of $117 million in January and replicating the strong windfall in early 2005 before the "jueteng" and "Hello Garci" scandals erupted.

The windfall in February was the highest monthly net inflow of portfolio investments reported by the BSP since January last year, when the inflows amounted to $543.5 million.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said it was possible that the strong portfolio inflows last year, which reached over $2 billion, could be replicated this year despite expectations that fixed income instruments may not match last year's strong performance.

He said foreign funds would only likely shift to local stocks from fixed income on expectation that stocks would outperform bonds this year.

Boosting confidence

Analysts said share prices should bounce back next week after Ms Arroyo gave up emergency powers she assumed to deal with alleged coup threats.

"The lifting of the state of emergency should further boost investor confidence as it suggests that the security situation is now stable. The market is also convinced that the economic fundamentals remain strong," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

Ms Arroyo imposed the state of emergency on Feb. 24 amid reports that military rebels, communist guerrillas and opposition figures were allegedly planning a coup.

Ms Arroyo's lifting of the state of emergency on Friday "should restore some normalcy. Hopefully we can sustain the rally" next week, added Oliver Plana of Asiasec Equities.

"Corporate reports are still expected to come out next week. Hopefully, that will still give the market some direction," he added.

For the week ending March 3, the composite index rose 2.9 percent or 60.44 points to 2,130.37 points.

Average daily turnover slipped to 821.2 million shares but value rose to P1.335 billion from 844.2 million shares worth P1.214 billion the previous week.

Ms Arroyo's action "would improve confidence in the country," said Jovis Vistan of AB Capital, remarking that the peso had strengthened in reaction to the lifting of the state of emergency. *With a report from AFP*

Crackdown continues

From page A1

she has not yet been officially informed of the charges. "They have been talking about this."

'Threats will continue'

Other journalists expressed skepticism at the turn of events.

Carlos Conde, secretary general of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines, said attempts to curtail press freedom would continue.

"Ms Arroyo will do everything to stay in power even with the lifting of PP 1017," Conde said.

"We have to strengthen our force because while the Arroyo administration remains questionable, while her stay in Malacañang is being clouded by doubt, threats will continue," he said.

Maximo Solis, station manager of RMN radio dxDC, said the lifting was part of government moves that the public should be vigilant about.

"We are in a situation that should prompt us to be on guard always," he said.

The militant labor alliance Kilusang Mayo Uno also advised "freedom lovers" to "maintain vigilance."

"The revocation [of PP 1017] was done merely in words, not in deeds. The attack on people's rights will continue to intensify," KMU national chair Elmer Labog said in a statement.

Too hot to handle

Labog claimed that emergency rule was lifted because "it was too hot to handle," with "militant groups, the media, lawyers, lawmakers and the public bond[ing] versus the Marcosian tactic."

He said the President's act only served as "a veil to obfuscate the intensifying suppression of the people's democratic, civil and political rights."

Other militant groups said that unless the government truly stopped the clampdown on dissent, an emergency state remained in effect.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said, recalling how the dictator Ferdinand Marcos lifted martial law in 1981 although military rule remained well until his ouster in 1986.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said: "The true test of the lifting of emergency rule will be if measures like General Order No. 5, warrantless arrests, guidelines for the media and the dispersal of rallies are also junked."

The lifting should be complete, and not "nominal," Reyes said.

Laban ng Masa chair Francisco Nemenzo Jr. said widespread opposition to PP 1017 and the threats it posed to civil liberties was crucial to Ms Arroyo's decision to lift it.

But "she is not yet off the hook," Nemenzo warned, saying the crisis of legitimacy confronting the administration had actually worsened.

"Even if PP 1017 has been lifted, Ms Arroyo's crimes against the people persist. The crime of plunder, deception and lying continues," said Akbayan president Ronald Llamas.

He said what the nation needed was not the lifting of the state of emergency but Ms Arroyo's exit.

Senate probe

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas leader Danilo Ramos said the lifting was probably intended to preempt an eventual Supreme Court ruling that PP 1017 was unconstitutional.

"The ultimate purpose of PP 1017 was not achieved, which is to frighten anti-Arroyo critics into inaction," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the chamber would proceed with its investigation of alleged abuses committed during the state of national emergency, including the police raid on the Daily Tribune newspaper and the warrantless arrests.

"We cannot simply gloss over these violations, if established, because to do so would send the signal to the government that it can do as it pleases regardless of what the Constitution says," Pangilinan said.

The Senate approved early this week Resolution No. 461 calling for an inquiry into government actions that allegedly violated fundamental freedoms. The resolution was introduced by 17 senators.

"Now more than ever, the Senate must act as a check and balance to the executive. We will not shirk this constitutional duty," Pangilinan said.

Former Sen. Loren Legarda said the people, particularly members of the media, were still jittery despite the lifting of the proclamation.

She said its after-effects would continue to linger, "like a festering wound that would take a long time to heal."

"[A state of emergency] should not have been declared, in the first place," Legarda said, adding that the root cause of the issue was the questioned legitimacy of the President's administration as a result of the alleged election fraud in 2004.

"The issue is illegitimacy, which cannot be swept under the rug," she stressed.

Out of the Tribune

Policemen yesterday pulled out of the premises of the Tribune's editorial office in Manila.

Insp. Jonathan Pablito of the Police Community Relations Group-Camp Crame, who was among the policemen assigned to guard the Tribune office, said they received the pullout order from their headquarters at around 1 p.m., or about an hour and a half after Ms Arroyo announced the lifting of PP 1017.

Pablito told the INQUIRER that before he and his group left, "we tried to ask for a certification that would show that we did not take anything and did not harass anybody."

But Olivares "declined," he said, adding:

"She said she did not have personal grudge against us because she understood that we were merely following orders. She was very civil with us during our stay, even greeting us whenever she came and left the office."

As far as Olivares is concerned, the police pullout is just a formality and does not indicate that the government will stop going after the Tribune.

"I'm very realistic in the sense that I know that they tried to cow us into submission by having us raided," Olivares said. "They saw I was not intimidated. It doesn't mean that they're going to stop. It's just that they're taking out the formal thing, which was the police."

She said she would have the Tribune office swept for listening devices in case bugs were installed during the raid.

Self-censorship

The police raided the Tribune office shortly after the President issued PP 1017 on Feb. 24.

Olivares said that when policemen were stationed outside the Tribune building, their presence did not affect her personally or professionally.

"It didn't matter to me whether or not they were here," she said. "It's like they were not going to stop me from writing what I wanted to write or from publishing what I wanted to publish."

She said a similar experience during martial law had prepared her for the raid, but that it did not seem to be the case for others.

For example, she said, she had noticed that her reporters appeared to be practicing "self-censorship" following the incident.

"But I suppose psychologically, that will also be lifted with the lifting of [PP 1017]," she said.

Thanks to media

Olivares expressed gratitude to her colleagues in the media for condemning the raid on the Tribune.

"It would have been a stiffer fight if the media in their entirety did not give me support. It's fantastic," she said.

She added that the issue was not about one newspaper but about press freedom: "The Tribune is incidental. I am incidental to the raid. The raid itself was seen by the media as a symbol of the loss of their freedom, and I think that was the reason the media came in full force and full support. For that, I'm really grateful." *Reports from Alcuin Papa, Jerome Aning, Philip C. Tubeza, DJ Yap, Cynthia D. Balana, Tina G. Santos, Leila B. Salaverria and Luige del Puerto; and Jeoffrey Maitem, Franklin Caliguid, Judy Quiros, Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Drilon: SC must rule on petitions

SENATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DRILON said the Supreme Court should still rule on the merits of petitions questioning the legality of PP 1017.

"A lot of important issues will be left hanging [if the high court does not rule on] the legality of warrantless arrests, the takeover of the Daily Tribune, and the supposed arrest of party-list representatives in the House," Drilon said.

Ibarra Gutierrez III, head of the Institute of Human Rights based in the University of the Philippines College of Law, expressed a similar view.

"Even if … the proclamation has already been lifted, we would like to insist that the Supreme Court make a ruling to prevent [future abuse by the government]," he said.

Gutierrez belongs to a group of lawyers that filed one of the petitions pending before the tribunal, which has scheduled oral arguments on Tuesday.

FVR: Plots to persist

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL RAMOS said that unless President Macapagal-Arroyo acted on the legitimate complaints aired by soldiers and policemen who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, coup plots against her administration would persist.

"The President, as Commander in Chief, and the commanders in the field must attend to the … recurring concerns of soldiers, policemen and veterans," Ramos said, adding that these were "all well-outlined in the Feliciano Commission report."

Ramos also said that while he was "gratified" by the lifting of PP 1017, much had yet to be done by Ms Arroyo to appease the restive sector.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Soviet leadership ordered John Paul II hit, says panel

ROME—LEADERS OF THE FORMER Soviet Union ordered the assassination bid on Pope John Paul II in 1981, the head of an Italian parliamentary commission announced Thursday.

Sen. Paolo Guzzanti said the findings of the commission showed "beyond all reasonable doubt" that Moscow's military secret service, the GRU, was responsible for the shooting as the late Pope greeted pilgrims in St. Peter's Square.

The assertion, for years a favorite of conspiracy theorists in Italy, reopened old Cold War wounds but prompted an immediate denial from Moscow's post-Soviet secret service, who dismissed it as "totally absurd."

"This commission believes, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the leaders of the USSR took the initiative to eliminate Pope Karol Wojtyla and that they communicated this decision to the military secret service .... to commit a crime of unique gravity, without equal in modern history," according to a draft made available to journalists.

The conclusions were contained in a chapter of the report by the Mitrokhin Commission, set up by the Italian parliament to investigate Cold War secrets revealed by Vasili Mitrokhin, a Soviet archivist who defected to the West in 1992.

Turkish hitman Ali Agca shot and seriously wounded John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.

Agca, who was overpowered seconds after the attack, was put on trial in July 1981 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Italy, but freed in June 2000 after being pardoned by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

Despite rumors linking Agca with the Bulgarian secret services, and by extension the Russian KGB, the reasons for the attack have always been shrouded in mystery.

Historians have long held that John Paul II's support for the Solidarity-inspired democracy movement in Poland was a thorn in the side of the Soviet Union, and the late Pope has been credited with helping to tear down the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Italy put three Bulgarians and three Turks on trial in 1986 on charges that they had orchestrated the murder bid, but they were acquitted when prosecutors were unable to prove a link with Agca.

The commission report now concludes that one of the Bulgarians acquitted in 1986 for lack of evidence, Sergei Antonov, was indeed in St. Peter's Square at the time of the shooting, standing close to Agca.

A photograph purporting to show Antonov in the crowd, sporting a moustache and heavy glasses, was printed in Italian newspapers Thursday.

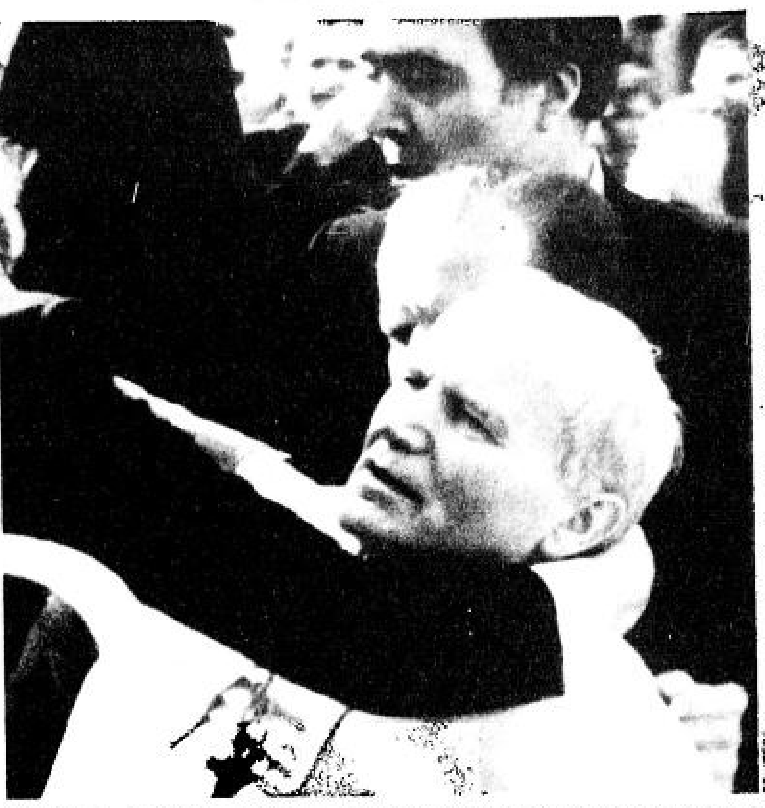
A lawyer for Antonov—head of Bulgaria's national airline in Rome—had previously argued a case of mistaken identity, but the Commission said police scientists had confirmed the man as Antonov.

The commission said the Soviets had "used the Bulgarian agents as cover against possible failure."

The Russians also used the East German secret service, the Stasi, to spread "disinformation and media poisoning," which Guzzanti said had been achieved with excellent results.

The full parliamentary commission, which has yet to adopt the report, is due to meet next week.

AFP


REUTERS

POPE John Paul II lies seriously wounded moments after he was shot by Turkish Mehmet Ali Agca in St. Peter's Square in this May 13, 1981 photo.

US seen not ready for bird flu epidemic

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES IS preparing for the arrival of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu but is not ready, a top US health official said Thursday, as a spate of bird deaths in the Bahamas raises fears it has reached the Americas.

Julie Gerberding, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told a congressional hearing the US was intensifying its efforts globally to contain the rapidly spreading outbreak, which has killed at least 94 people since late 2003.

"We need to expect a bird arriving with this pathogen in the US and we are, as the government, taking the steps to be as prepared as possible," Gerberding testified before a House of Representatives committee.

Her testimony came in the context of a bird flu scare in the Bahamas, the Caribbean island chain nestled between Florida and Cuba. Tests for the H5N1 virus were under way on samples collected from dead birds discovered in a wildlife reserve.

The CDC chief pointed out that domestic poultry outbreaks were spreading to "more and more countries" and the pace was accelerating.

"Last year's strain looks different than this year's strain ... we're not dealing with a seasonal virus but a highly lethal virus that no one has immunity to," she told the House Appropriations subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

"The current situation right now isn't a good situation," she warned.

To contain the global H5N1 outbreak and prevent a human pandemic if the virus mutates to a form easily transmitted between people, the US government is working closely with "global partners" to build a worldwide network to fight the virus, she said.

"If there is a threat anywhere we have to respond as if it were a threat here."

But the federal health chief sounded a warning about the level of US preparedness.

"I would say that we're less than 50 percent ready but we are about a hundred times more prepared than we were three years ago, so our progress is rapid but our job is big and we have a long way to go," she said.

AFP

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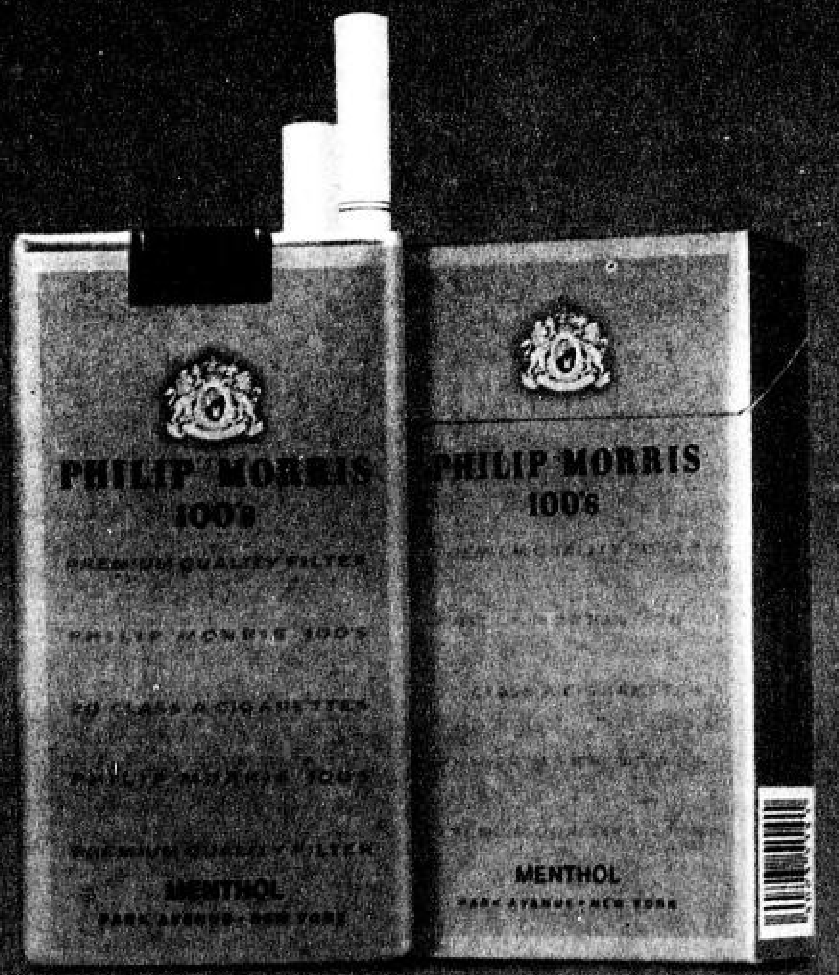

Government Warning:
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China faces rural health crisis

By Elaine Kurtenbach

SHANGHAI, CHINA—THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL statistics tallying the toll in human suffering, wasted lives and broken families. But by most accounts, after nearly two decades of neglect, China is confronting a rural health crisis on a monumental scale.

Up to 90 percent of the 800 million people in China's countryside lack affordable medical care. Children go unvaccinated. AIDS patients can get free anti-retroviral drugs, but can't afford the monitoring or additional drugs they need.

"Most of the people in rural areas dare not to see a doctor when they get sick simply because they cannot afford it," said Zhang Deyuan, an expert on rural problems at Anhui University.

After years of neglect, communist leaders are now promising to rebuild a rural health care system that has fallen apart with the decline of farm cooperatives over two decades of economic reform.

The commitment is part of a package of policies aimed at redressing the huge gap between China's fast-growing cities and rural areas where the government faces growing protests over poverty, corruption and other problems.

Such issues of how to improve life in the restive countryside are expected to dominate the annual meeting of China's parliament, which opens on Sunday.

A plan issued this week by the Cabinet declares rural health care a national priority.

By 2010, "farmers can expect safe, effective, convenient and low-cost health services," said a Cabinet statement.

A YOUNG patient receives treatment at village clinic in Suxiao, Anhui Province in China in this Jan. 29, 2002 photo. Up to 90 percent of the 800 million Chinese living in the countryside now lack access to affordable medical care. Children go unvaccinated. AIDS patients can get free anti-retroviral drugs, but can't afford the monitoring or additional drugs they need. AP

It promised 9 billion yuan ($1.1 billion; euro900 million) in new spending on a nationwide system of rural medical cooperatives and doctors that would guarantee treatment to anyone in the countryside.

The challenge is how to make the system work when even urban health services are underfunded and doctors make money by prescribing unneeded drugs and tests, said Ray Yip, director of the Beijing office of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rural China never had lavish medical care, but for two decades after the 1949 communist revolution, villages got help from "barefoot doctors" with basic training who vaccinated children and provided other services.

"The situation became much worse when the farmers lost the barefoot doctors," says Li Ling, a researcher at the Chinese Economic Research Center at Peking University. "When people needed medical care, they could go to them for help."

The decline has been gradual, over nearly 20 years, while higher incomes and better food have helped improve public health overall, masking the severity of the problem, Yip said.

"Fundamentally, they're going down a slippery slope of decline in the overall health situation," he said.

According to Zhang, rural residents account for 70 percent of China's population of 1.3 billion people but get less than 20 percent of spending on medical services.

"This is extremely unbalanced," he said.

Chinese farmers pay most or all of their own medical expenses, while city dwellers who earn nearly three times as much pay for only a portion of their total costs.

And farmers are charged the same prices as their better-paid city cousins. AP

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Diesel engines likely to return to Japan

TOKYO—IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST drive.

When Seiichi Himei, a 35-year-old engineer-turned-cattle farmer, took the Peugeot 307 HDi for a spin two years ago, he couldn't believe the force produced by the small, 1.4-liter car.

The magic ingredient? A diesel engine.

Touted for their torque and fuel economy, diesel-powered cars now make up half the European market but have long since lost street credit in Japan, where, after a series of tax changes and a damaging image campaign, just a single model remains on sale.

But diesel-savvy European car makers, cheered by a growing acceptance in the United States and the arrival of cleaner fuel, are gearing up to reverse that trend in a move that could force domestic brands to follow suit and stir up the world's third-biggest car market.

A comeback by diesels could also give European brands—long the underdogs with just 4 percent of Japan's car market—a welcome boost, help domestic oil refiners cut their losses by creating a better balance of gasoline and diesel supply, nudge Japan closer to a UN-mandated goal of cutting greenhouse gases, and provide a boon for diesel-parts makers such as Bosch and Ibiden Co.

"You can buy practically anything in Japan, but not diesel cars," said Himei, a native of Okayama, who drove a gasoline 307 before buying his used diesel version online.

"It's high time Japan woke up to its merits."

It wasn't always so.

In 1990, diesel powered 6.4 percent of all new cars sold in Japan. But a law in 1992 lowering the limit on emissions of smog-forming nitrogen oxide—a major byproduct when burning diesel fuel—and tax changes that effectively narrowed the cost advantage of diesel fuel and made diesel cars more expensive, prompted a steady downturn in demand.

In 1999 came the death blow from Tokyo's celebrity governor.

Kicking off a campaign to wipe diesel cars off the capital's streets, Shintaro Ishihara, in a widely televised stunt, waved a bottle containing black particles of carcinogenic soot that are emitted in greater quantity by diesels than gasoline vehicles.

The effect was immediate.

As the Japanese public increasingly shunned the powertrain, auto makers pulled back their offerings, and by 2003 there were only 10 models versus 24 a year earlier.

Now, only Toyota Motor Corp.'s Landcruiser Prado remains, while buyers can choose from some 200 gasoline models.

That will change this fall. In Japan's first new diesel car launch in four years, DaimlerChrysler's Mercedes brand will roll out a diesel E-Class and has promised more to come.

"We're optimistic about diesels' prospects here," said Hans Tempel, head of DaimlerChrysler Japan.

Other diesel advocates such as Volkswagen—which now offers the powertrain on its entire US product line—and France's Peugeot are also eager to test the water, although they have yet to announce concrete plans. *Reuters*

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Phone users say text messaging still best service

SINGAPORE—TEXT MESSAGING REMAINS the most popular service for mobile phone users in the Asia Pacific despite offers for fancier applications such as e-mail and gaming, an industry research group said Friday.

International Data Corp. (IDC) said its survey showed that less than 10 percent of mobile phone users are utilizing services other than the reliable short messaging system (SMS), or text messaging.

There had been hype that the humble SMS would be eclipsed by its more advanced cousins following the emergence of pricey third generation (3G) mobile phones and more advanced content applications.

But IDC said that the "latest findings reveal that, despite the proliferation of content-rich mobile data services, the adoption of advanced services such as mobile phone payment, online mobile gaming and mobile e-mail have yet to reach noteworthy levels of usage."

IDC telecom analyst Karen Rondon added: "Improved adoption of different mobile data services will go hand in hand with the pervasiveness of mobile handsets capable of supporting such services as well as ease of use.

"The challenge therefore lies with service operators and mobile phone vendors to educate and accustom the market to the value proposition of such services and mobile devices that come with affordable price tags."

IDC's survey covered 4,056 urban Internet users in Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.

Mobile phone penetration rates also rose sharply in 2005, IDC said, with the number of respondents who owned mobile phones reaching 90.2 percent, up from 80.2 percent in 2004.

"SMS (remained) as the most popular mobile data application, with 65 percent of the users sending text messages every day," IDC said. *AFP*

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EU agrees to last-ditch talks with Iran

VIENNA—BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY have agreed to a last-minute request by Tehran for ministerial talks Friday ahead of possible UN action over Western fears that Iran is secretly developing nuclear weapons.

But there seemed to be little room for compromise, with Iran insisting on its right to enrich uranium and the European Union and the United States saying Tehran must give up this process, which makes nuclear reactor fuel but also atom bomb material.

The European trio which negotiates for the EU on Iran has warned Tehran in writing that progress Friday is totally dependent on Iran stopping uranium enrichment and cooperating with UN nuclear inspections.

"Anything short of this would result in a public disagreement, which would set back our shared objectives," said a letter from the trio's foreign ministers, as well as European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, that was obtained by AFP.

The letter, which a diplomat said was delivered Tuesday to Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, sets "out in advance some of the considerations that will be critical for success," the text said.

"In our judgment, for such a meeting to be productive, we would need to conclude with a clear public commitment from Iran to return immediately to the status quo ante," the letter said, referring to Iran's agreement to suspend uranium enrichment.

Larijani requested the meeting but has given no specifics on what he seeks, one diplomat told AFP.

A European official said the EU countries, which fear Iran may be hiding secret development of atomic weapons, were "not particularly optimistic about the outcome of the meeting."

And the United States gave only half-hearted support to the talks, with state department deputy spokesperson Adam Ereli saying Washington was "under no illusions."

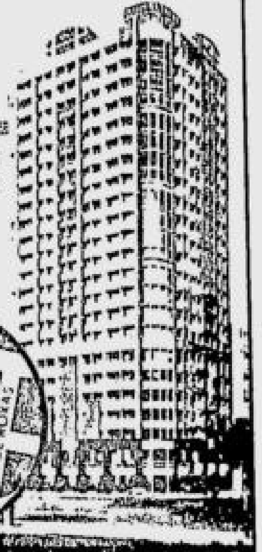
"As we have throughout this process, we're supportive of the EU-3—I think we're working well together," he said. "Let's see what happens on Friday."

"But the baseline is the same. Is Iran going to suspend enrichment activity? Is Iran going to return to the negotiations? Or is Iran going to continue, as we think they have, to stall and prevaricate and extend things in a meaningless way in order to avoid censure?"

But an Iranian diplomat told AFP there "could be a breakthrough if things go well" and that the meeting "could be a good opportunity to reach a general understanding that could defuse the situation."

The talks come ahead of a crunch meeting March 6 of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA is to make an assessment of Iran's nuclear program that will be sent to the UN Security Council, which could then take punitive action.

Larijani, speaking from Moscow after talks there, confirmed that he planned to meet EU representatives but gave no date. *AFP*



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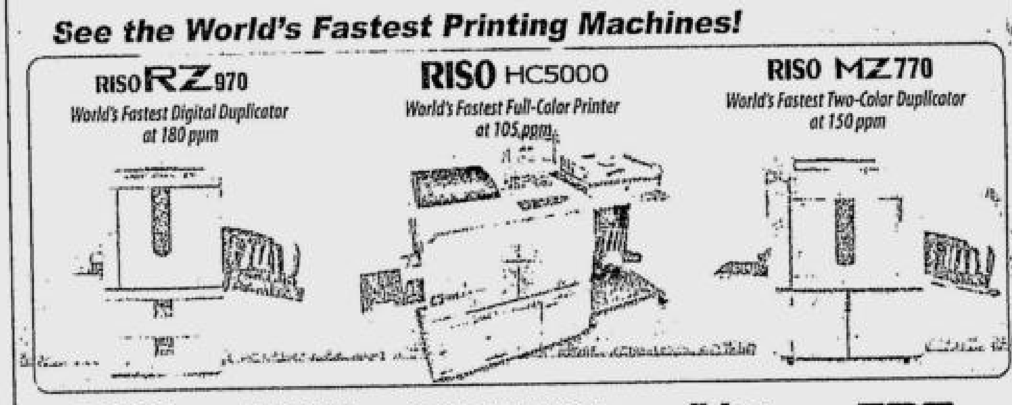
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	[illegible]	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5		KNN	Anime Ring Kashio		PBA					Wow Mali Mah		Ripley's Believe It or Not		ABCinema					
ABS-CBN 2	ETK				Nginiig		Little Big Star	Komiks		My Juan And Only		Quezon Avenue		TV Patrol World	Pinoy Big Brother	Sabado Movie Greats			
AXN																			
Cartoon Network	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		The Life & Times Of Juniper Lee	Xiaolin Showdown	X-Men Evolution	Teen Titans	Superman The Animated Series					Battle B-Daman	The Gransazers	Xiaolin Showdown	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Aqua Teen Hunger Force	Space Ghost Coast to Coast
Cinemax	Blue Demon (2:35 PM)			Mistral			Sweet Poison			Dave (7:10 PM)				Confidence			Triggermen (10:40PM)		
CNN	Diplomatic License	World News	World Business This Week	World News	International Correspondents	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News/Quest	Next@CNN/Global Office/CNN Bus Traveller	World News	International Correspondents/Inside The Middle East	World News	World Sport	World News	Talk Asia	World News	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart
Disney Channel	Recess	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Brandy & Mr Whiskers	Lilo & Stitch	Buzz on Maggie	Mr Bean	Phil Of The Future	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Mr Bean	America's Funniest Home Video	Kim Possible	Phil Of The Future	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pool Snooker World Pool League '05 Poland		Winter X Games Classic CO USA	Winter X-GAmes X - Day 2 Part 1			Pool World Pool Masters 2002		Pool World Pool League '02		Pool Mosconi Cup '02		Winter X Games Classic	NBA Game Clippers @ Jazz				
ETC		Love Shack		Friends 10	Will & Grace 4	Saturday Night Live		The O.C. 2		Beauty & The Geek		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Miracles Of The Child Jesus	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Image Of God	Adventures In Odyssey	Knights Of St. Michael	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Church And The Poor: Building Bridges	Catholic Compass		The World Over Encore		Fr. John Corapi		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Sacraments Through The Ages	Life on The Rock Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Special Report With Brit Hume		Fox & Friends Saturday						Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business
GMA 7	Startalk			Wish Ko Lang		Wag Kukurap	Pinoy Pop Superstar		Bitoy's Funniest Videos/Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho		Imbestigador		Hokus Pocus			Showbiz Stripped			
Hallmark Channel	Ladies Man	Ladies Man	Frederick Forsyth's Icon			Frederick Forsyth's Icon				The Magic Of Ordinary Days				The Lives Of The Saints					
HBO				Gettin' Square			Caddyshack (5:45 PM)				Cat In The Hat			After The Sunset			The Core		
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		Nations Progressive	Good Take	Home Shopping Network		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics		Bitag		Philippine Sabong Sports	Bantay Ozone Layer		
JackTV	X-Men	JLU	The Batman	X-Play	Cinematech	Bottomline		Raw				Family Guy	Banzai	Mad TV		South Park	South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers
Lifestyle Network	Carol Duvall	HGTV Special		Sheila Bridges Designer Living	Radical Sabbatical	Simply Wine Andrea Immer	Food Fight	Date Plate	Emeril Live		Iron Chef America		Merge				NY Fashion Week	E! Extra Jackie Collins Presents	
MTV Philippines				MTV Presents				Homecoming	PunkD	Wild N' Out	MTV Cribs			Chart Attack		Brand New	Massive	Jams	Rockola
MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	MYX Presents		Take 5	Radio MYX	Top Of The Pops	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Live!		Pinoy MYX Countdown				MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		The Astounding World		Frontlines Of Construction				Be The Creature		Built For The Kill		Dangerous Encounters		The Kung Fu Dragons Of Wudang		Made In Hong Kong		Stuntmen Of Bollywood	
NBN				Corporate Boards League		Kamao		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Talk To Harry		GSIS Member's Hour		Isa Hour On NBN				Cue Masters	
Nickelodeon	Drake & Josh	ChalkZone	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	Catscratch	Avatar: The Last Airbender	Danny Phantom	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Dark Oracle	Unfabulous	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	As Told By Ginger	Girls In Love	The Brothers Garcia	The Amanda Show	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Waway				Nagmula Sa Lupa				Fight Night 3				Forever				The Ultimate Champion Rachel Ann Go
Qtv		Kiddy Grade		Candies		Fam Jam		Fans Kita		Ayli Robot		Day Off		Sabado Showdown				Groupee TV	
RPN 9		Open Line	Pasok Sports Idol	Biyaheng Langit	Kids TV	Man & Machine		Isumbong mo kay Tulfo		Medical Investigation		CSI: Miami		Saturday Night Playhouse					
SBN 21								Sony Music Video		JA1		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports										NBA Game Bobcats @ Mavericks					Telefutura				GWS 00-2006
Sports Plus				PAC 10 Basketball UCLA @ USC				World Poker Tour 2				Ultimate Fighting Championship				Chrysler Classic of Tucson Highlights		Ford Chmp @ Doral Day2	
Star Movies			Alex & Emma (3:35 PM)			King Arthur (6:15 PM)					Laws Of Attraction			Broken Lizard's Club Dread			In Enemy Hands		
Star World		The Contender/American Idol 2006		Miami Vice		Wild Card		John Doe		The Chronicle News From The Edge		TNA Xplosion		Ghost Hunters		Enterprise		The Kumars At No 42	Less Than Perfect
Studio 23								Sports TV	Mr Bean	Pinoy Big Brother		Gilmore Girls (7:50 PM)	Jack & Bobby (8:40 PM)		Studio 23 Presents				

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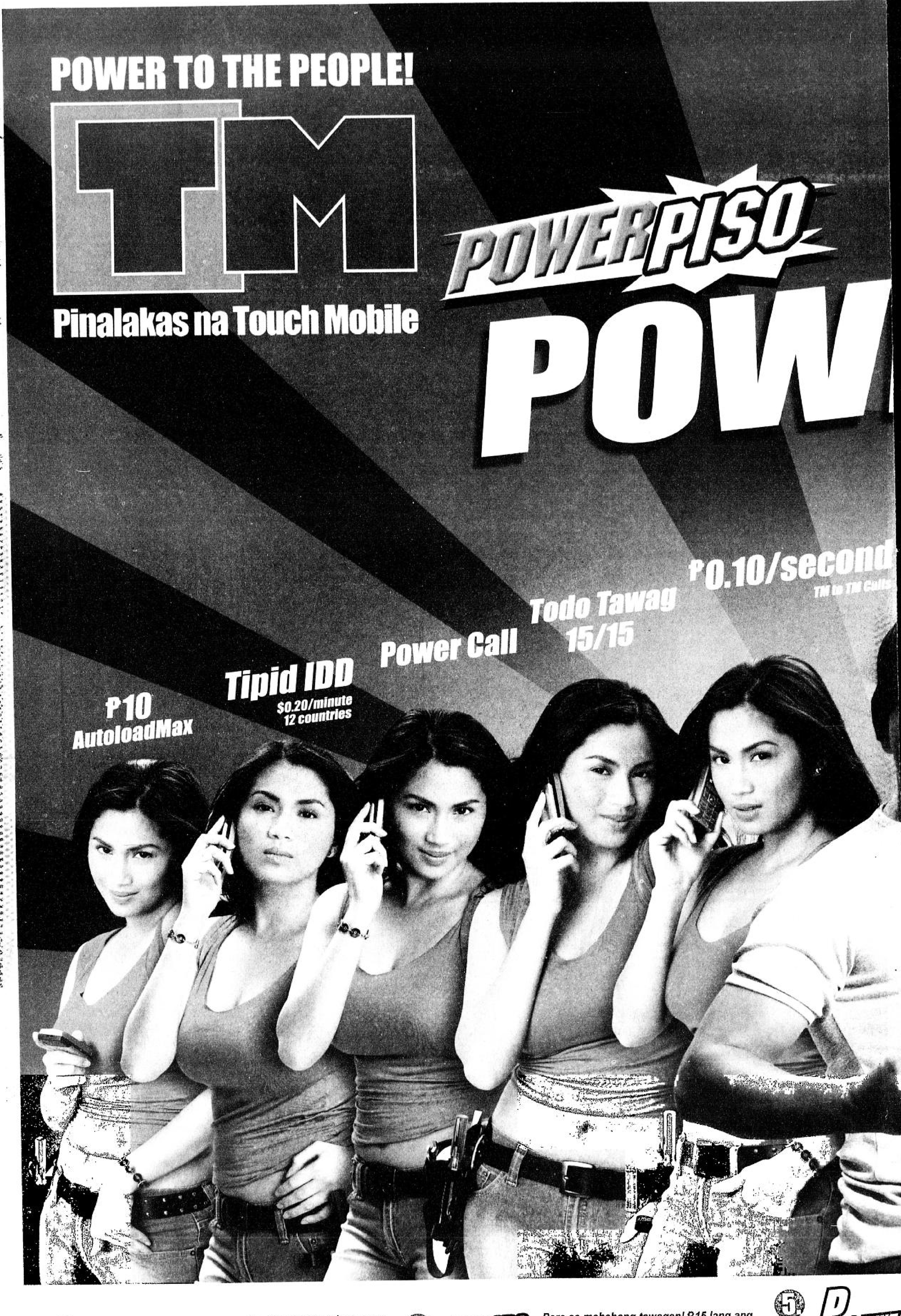
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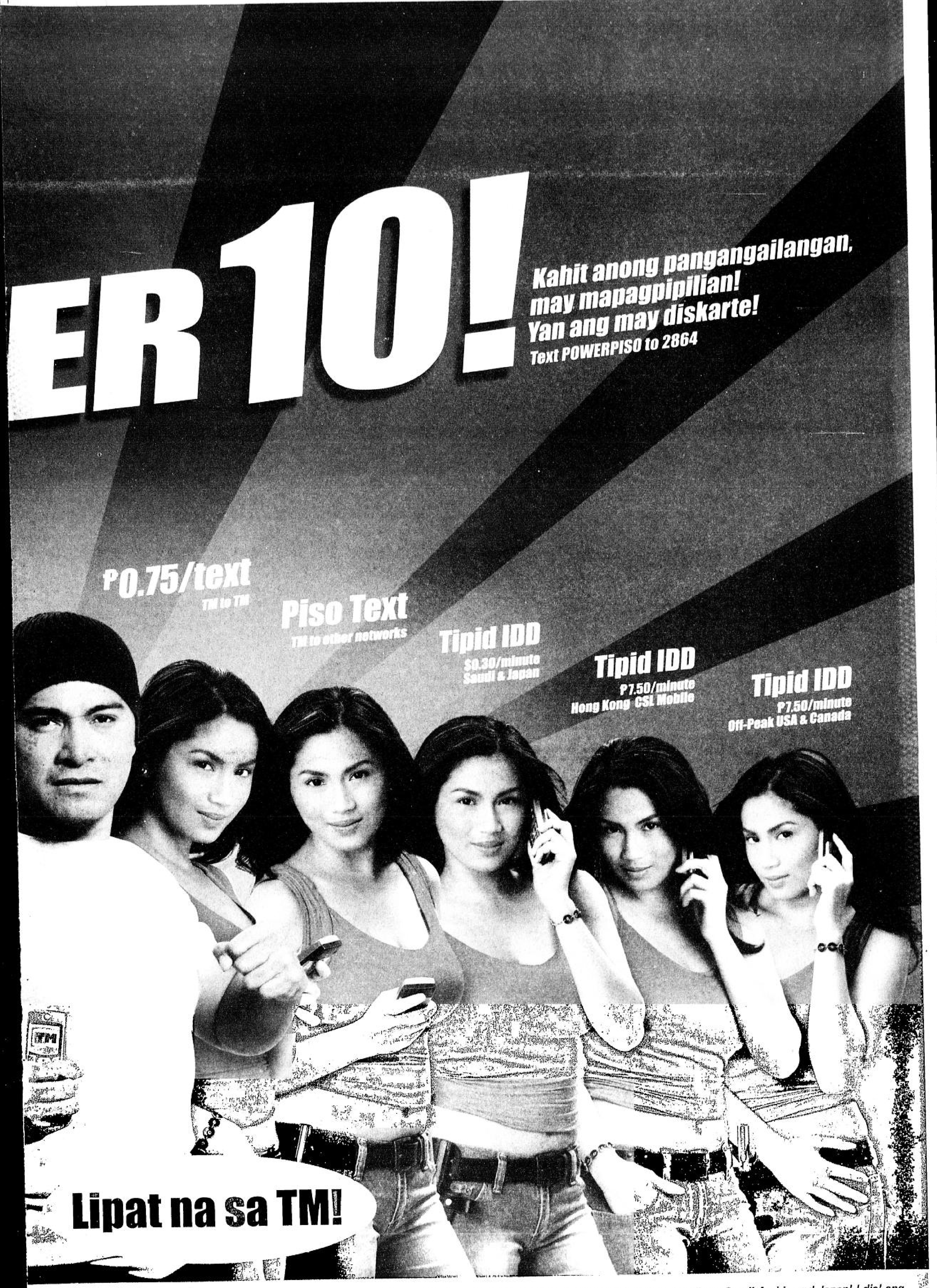
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Trail of corruption

EDITORIAL

IF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAD HOPED TO cover the trail of the P728-million fertilizer scandal by barring top government officials from testifying at the Senate, then it hoped wrong. True, the Senate blue ribbon and agriculture committees couldn't get the full story, with EO 464 getting in the way of the fact-finding inquiry. And because of the proclamation of a state of national emergency, they even had to call off the last hearing scheduled last Monday for fear that witnesses might be arrested for being a party to alleged destabilization moves in that legislative body. Still this did not keep the Senate from laying the blame right on the doorstep of Malacañang.

The report, prepared by the two committees and released Wednesday, said that based on their investigation, "massive misappropriation, diversion and malversation of public funds and raids on the farmers' money" appear to have been committed by top officials of the Department of Agriculture. The committees recommended that plunder charges be filed against the officials who handled the program, including then Secretary Cito Lorenzo and Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante, whom they called the "declared architect" of the fertilizer fund scam, as well as the fertilizer suppliers. Lorenzo and Bolante evaded questioning by the Senate by ignoring subpoenas and going abroad.

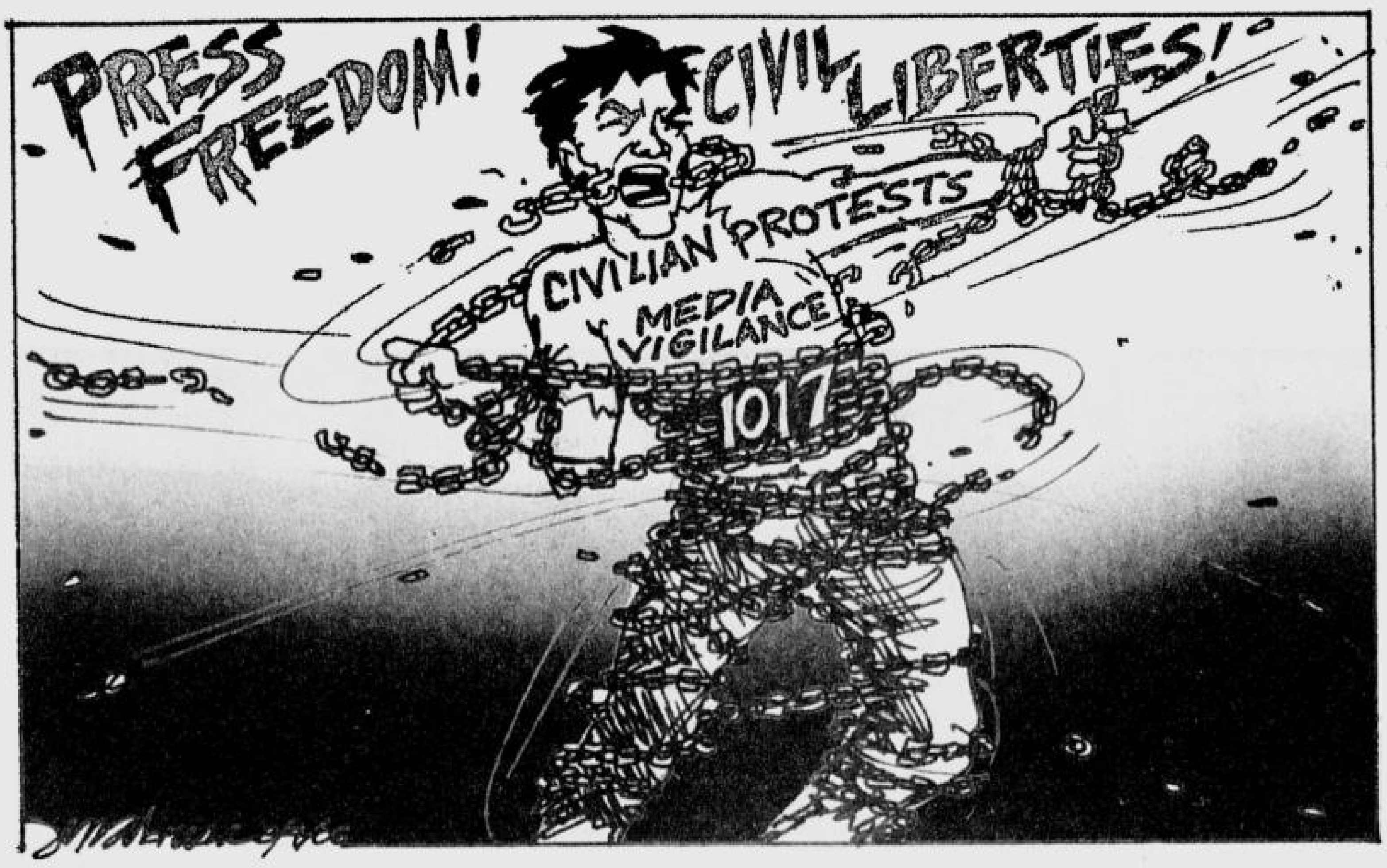
Aware that she enjoyed immunity, the senators stopped short of calling for the filing of similar charges against President Macapagal-Arroyo. But they obviously had little doubt about her complicity. Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the agriculture committee, said the Senate was holding her "accountable" for what it called the "premeditated, systematic theft" of the agricultural funds. "All allegations and testimony pointed to her benefiting the most in an intricate scheme of deception and fraud," the report said. "The fertilizer fund was misused. It was corrupted. It was intended to assure her victory" in the 2004 presidential elections. But by shielding officials "directly responsible for squandering taxpayers' money" and failing to disprove the charges, the report said, the President only confirmed her "culpability and involvement in this unforgivable act."

Given the strong language of their report and their equally strong belief that top officials were involved in high crimes, there is little doubt about how the senators want this case to end, and that is, with all those involved behind bars. But what the Senate wants is not always what it gets—and not especially when top administration officials and allies are involved.

In the normal course of things, the Office of the Ombudsman would have hurried to investigate this case the moment the allegations of massive fraud surfaced. The anti-graft body has the mandate to investigate such cases either on its own initiative or in response to a complaint, whether formal or informal. But then this is not your usual case. Not only are top officials involved, but they are being accused of misappropriating hundreds of millions of pesos to help bankroll the campaign of the President. And when the alleged fraudulent deals are related to the 2004 elections, paralysis sets in at the Ombudsman.

Consider the fraud-tainted P1.2 billion contract for the computerization of the counting of votes. The Supreme Court did not only nullify the deal but also ordered the Ombudsman to file graft charges against everyone who had a hand in it. That was two years ago. When the Court demanded to know recently why its order was being ignored, rather than explain or get on with the investigation, the Ombudsman practically challenged the Court to make good its threat to cite it for contempt, declaring that, being a constitutional body, it was beyond the Court's reach.

There is little indication that the Ombudsman is eager to touch the fertilizer scam either. Of course, it has earlier announced that it had organized a task force to look into the case. But that came only after the Senate told it to start working. Will the release of the Senate investigation report make the Ombudsman move faster? Highly unlikely. Not with the personalities involved and not especially since the trail leads to the Palace by the Pasig.



Proclamation No. 1017

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

WHOEVER ADVISED PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo to issue her Proclamation No. 1017 must have unwittingly committed a monumental blunder or wickedly persuaded her to slit her political throat. Worse, she conceivably just ignored her knowledgeable advisers, insisted she knew better than they, and went ahead with her illegal act.

With several so-called two law experts in Malacañang, the secretary of justice in the Cabinet, the solicitor general at her beck and call, and other lawyers in her camp, she insolently issued her decree and exposed herself as a legal ignoramus. Even a law freshman would have informed her that her proclamation was a self-serving and unlawful impertinence.

The more enlightened members of the Philippine bar shared the correct consensus that her declaration of a state of national emergency was null and void, at best only her own factual assessment without legal or binding effect. Even if disputably correct, it does not confer on her additional sanctions to those available to her under present law.

She asserted the arbitrary power to make warrantless arrests from her mere declaration of a national emergency. That claim was absurd. There is nothing in the Constitution that authorizes that imposture, but that absence did not deter her. Her acts suggest her arrogant belief that she is above the law and may disregard it at her imperious pleasure.

The deteriorating peace and order does not automatically convert GMA into a remedial dictator. In the leading Emergency Powers Cases, 84 Phil. 368; 92 Phil. 603, Chief Justice Ricardo Paras said, "Emergency itself cannot and should not create power." She can exercise emergency powers only if they are entrusted to her by Congress after first ascertaining the existence of the emergency to justify their grant.

Art. VI, Sec. 23(2) of the Constitution explicitly provides: "In times of war or other national emergency, the Congress may, by law, authorize the President, for a limited period and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out a declared national policy." Congress alone can grant emergency powers to the President and define the national policy its constitutional delegate shall implement.

GMA's defenders said that her proclamation was based on Art. XII, Sec. 17 of the Constitution, which provides: "In times of national emergency, when the public interest so requires, the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest."

The argument scraped the bottom of the barrel. The provision applies only to economic and non-political matters and not to warrantless arrests of suspected criminals. More importantly, **President Arroyo is not the State,** which as a rule acts through statutes enacted by Congress. If the Constitution had intended otherwise, it would have expressly made the President an exception to the rule.

In the famous Steel Seizure Case, 343 US 579, the US Supreme Court reversed President Truman when, for national security reasons but without lawful authorization, he ordered US soldiers to temporarily take over the operation of private steel mills left idle by their striking workers.

President Arroyo was actually placing the country under martial law but did not admit it because of the limitations in Art. VII, Sec. 18 of the Constitution.

The proclamation of martial law must be reported to Congress within 48 hours and will lapse after 60 days if not revoked or extended by it. The President cannot set aside the revocation. The Constitution and the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus are not suspended. All legislative assemblies shall continue to function, military tribunals cannot preempt civilian courts, and all persons arrested for rebellion or crimes related to invasion must be released if they are not judicially charged within three days. A challenge to martial law before the Supreme Court cannot be dismissed as a political question and must be decided within 30 days.

Martial law can be imposed only in case of rebellion or invasion which is why Proclamation No. 1017 invoked only lawless violence as its justification. This was another lame excuse to evade the restrictions of Sec. 18 while exercising in disguise the extraordinary powers it permits. This was a worse deception than the open abuses of his military power by Ferdinand Marcos.

Coming back to warrantless arrests, the rule laid down in the slavish case of Garcia-Padilla v. Enrile, 121 SCRA 472, was that suspected rebels can be arrested without warrant because rebellion is a continuing crime that is deemed being committed by the suspect whatever he may be innocently doing at the time of his arrest. It was from that ridiculous doctrine that I dissented when our reorganized Supreme Court affirmed it in the widely criticized case of Umil v. Ramos, 187 SCRA 311. That ruling has yet to be expunged from our jurisprudence.

What's the matter with the Ombudsman?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ HAS been in office for three months now. In that period, she found the time to prepare a 44-page comment on why the Supreme Court cannot hold the Office of the Ombudsman in contempt for failing to determine the criminal liability of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and other parties in regard to the P1.3 billion contract that was signed by Abalos and voided by the high court.

The irony is she wouldn't be answering the Supreme Court if she had devoted that time to doing her job—that is, if she had approved or disapproved the recommendations of the panel who did the preliminary investigation on the case.

To refresh our memories, let me try to construct a time line (near as I can make out from newspaper reports and case documents) of the events surrounding the issue, starting with the high court decision.

Jan. 13, 2004: In a case filed by the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines (ITFP), the Supreme Court declares null and void a P1.3 billion contract between the Comelec and a consortium called Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. (MPEI). The decision directs the Office of the Ombudsman to "determine the criminal liability, if any, of the public officials (and conspiring private individuals, if any) involved (in) the Comelec decision and the contract."

Jan. 14, 2004: Ombudsman Simeon V. Marcelo quickly issues an order directing what is now called the Field Investigation Office (FIO) to conduct such an investigation.

Oct. 7, 2004: The FIO submits its findings to the Ombudsman's Legal, Monitoring and Prosecution Division, headed by Maria Olivia Roxas, which in turn prepares a complaint to the effect that the Comelec had indeed entered into a grossly disadvantageous contract with MPEI, such as (a) it knowingly acquired overpriced automated counting machines; and (b) the Comelec gave undue advantage to MPEI by allowing the latter to base the purchase amount on the exchange rate of P58-$1, when the prevailing rate then was P53-$1. (This raised the cost further by about P130 million.) Reportedly, the FIO also found alarming linkages between the top officials of the Comelec and officers of MPEI (e.g., Abalos and MPEI incorporator Pedro Tan stood as sponsors at the wedding of a son of two MPEI incorporators, spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek).

Ombudsman Marcelo then inhibits himself from the case (because Abalos was a client of the Villaraza law office, of which Marcelo was a partner). He turns the case over to Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Victor Fernandez for preliminary investigation and decision. Here is where the time line gets fuzzy.

In a phone conversation, I asked Fernandez when he convened the preliminary investigation panel and when that panel made its resolution on the case (which had to be within 90 days from the time the contending parties filed all their affidavits and counter-affidavits). The good deputy ombudsman could not remember at all—a *lapsus mentis* here. With that in mind, let us proceed.

Feb. 11, 2005: The Court receives a comment from the Ombudsman on a motion filed by the Comelec, asking permission to use the automated counting machines. In its comment, the Ombudsman stated that the case had been consolidated with other cases and "are the subject of preliminary investigation and/or administrative adjudication before the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon." So at least we know that the preliminary investigation was already ongoing at that time.

Nov. 30, 2005: Simeon Marcelo's resignation becomes effective.

Early December 2005: Merceditas Gutierrez is appointed as his successor. Deputy Ombudsman Fernandez turns over the papers on the Comelec case over to her, because, he says, his authority to act on the case ended when Marcelo ceased to be Ombudsman. Unfortunately, one cannot tell how long Fernandez was sitting on the case, or whether he just got cold feet. As I said, Fernandez had a memory lapse and seemed to be in no mood to check his records. He also told me that the recommendations of his investigating panel were "confidential."

Dec. 22, 2005: ITFP asks the Supreme Court to direct the Ombudsman to update the Court on the progress of the investigation it had ordered almost two years before, as well as to give the Court an indication of when the Ombudsman would most likely complete its determination/investigation on whether any public official may be criminally charged for these illegal transactions.

Jan. 27, 2006, ITFP, still tenacious, files a supplemental motion giving the Supreme Court information on what was going on at the Ombudsman, and asking the Court to ask the Ombudsman to show cause why it should not be held in contempt for failing to act on the Court's directive for more than two years from its receipt of the Jan. 13, 2004 decision.

Feb. 14, 2006: The Supreme Court grants the ITFP's requests.

So what does Merceditas Gutierrez do? Instead of deciding whether or not to approve the recommendations of her preliminary investigation panel (those recommendations were definitely on her table when she started her job), she wastes her time getting all high and mighty about the Ombudsman's being an independent constitutional body (duh!) and the Supreme Court's directive being not mandatory but just a referral.

Is she protecting the people against corrupt officials? Or is she protecting corrupt officials?

The Liberal Party coup

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ONE HAS TO HAND IT TO THE GROUPS OPPOSED to President Macapagal-Arroyo. They adroitly handled public opinion and virtually bamboozled het advisers, including the Cabinet security cluster and key allies, to coerce her to lift Proclamation 1017. There were those, including allies in Congress, who felt that GMA should have been given a free hand on the matter, as she had the best intelligence information regarding dangers to the state. But the voices of this minority group was drowned out by the national—and international—clamor demanding the lifting of PP 1017. I join all those who hope and pray that she wouldn't have to reimpose it anymore and that conditions would finally stabilize in this poor country.

* * *

The government, battered by the media that were clearly against PP 1017, had a tough time explaining the existence of a "conspiracy" against GMA to justify the proclamation. But lo and behold, suddenly, Jose Ma. Sison issued a statement from Utrecht, virtually endorsing a military coup against GMA. Joma said "there's no other way to ensure the legal and nonviolent ouster of the Arroyo regime" but to "encourage the military and forces of the reactionary government to side with the people and withdraw support from the regime." I got texts afterwards inquiring whose side Joma is on.

* * *

Star's Boo Chanco wrote that, from the way Sen. Rodolfo Biazon talked about Brig. Gen. Danny Lim and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, he got the impression that "these two are the good guys." Indeed, many of my friends got the same impression from the TV coverage of the Marine standoff: Biazon was lavish in his praise of Querubin. Recalling the events of the bloody December 1989 coup attempt during Cory's time, I wonder if the former Marine commandant would have praised Querubin or welcomed political kibitzers who could have exacerbated the very tense situation. In 1989, Querubin ,who was then a major, challenged Biazon, then NCR commander, to stand with him before the entire Marine corps to see who had the bigger following. Biazon wisely ignored the challenge. Querubin joined the bloody coup soon after and was badly wounded in the tank attack on Camp Aguinaldo. Biazon led government troops in crushing the rebels.

* * *

One wonders what kind of money former President Estrada's Saludo sa Kawal Pilipino Foundation has that it could shell out P8 million or P10 million as "Christmas gift" to various soldiers' groups. But the bigger wonder is how his Christmas gift went only to groups identified with the rebel cause: the Magdalo soldiers, the group of Danny Lim and the Marine Corps. The explanation of the foundation's spokespersons is that the funds went to "cooperatives," but that doesn't look good for Erap as well as for those groups. It makes him look too conspiratorial and the rebel groups too mercenary.

* * *

The handling of the five leftist House members must be a tough balancing act for Speaker Jose de Venecia. When the police arrived to get them, JDV doubtless had to think of its implications. One was to prevent them from going back to the mountains, so they don't forsake their legislative mandate. Then, too, House members crossed partisan lines in clamoring for the protection of the civil rights of their colleagues. On the other hand, JDV had to demonstrate that no member of the House is above the law. He had to assure the police that if arrest warrants were to be issued by the court, he would turn over the five party-list representatives. JDV's solution was to put them under House custody, converting the anteroom of his big office into their provisional quarters. The five were getting fidgety at some point, but he managed to convince them that staying there was far safer than being outside.

* * *

In the political scene, the ouster of Liberal Party president Franklin Drilon and his replacement by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who was in turn replaced as LP chair by GMA chief of staff Mike Defensor, proved to be a bigger news than the lifting of PP 1017. Atienza's "coup" was bold and daring. The gathering of LP party leaders last Thursday began as a discussion of local autonomy, and ended up questioning the "dictatorship" of Drilon. Apparently, resentment against Drilon's "unauthorized" move to pit the party against GMA last July 8 had built up, especially since he had stubbornly resisted calls for a meeting of the grassroots leaders to thresh out the unity problem. A move by Gov. Sally Perez, an erstwhile Drilon ally, to declare all the party positions vacant led to the election of new leaders, despite the lonely effort of Drilon ally Chito Gascon to derail it. The LP leaders also voted to continue supporting GMA. But as with other groups, deep divisions showed. For instance, while Butch Abad and his wife, Rep. Henedina Abad, are against GMA, Batanes Gov. Vicente Gato and five of his mayors chartered a private plane just to come to Manila for Thursday's meeting, after regular flights were cancelled.

* * *

Drilon was quoted as saying his faction would question the "rump convention" before the Supreme Court and the Comelec, but I doubt if they would entertain a purely party matter. Moreover, in the LP leadership fight, things definitely favor Atienza since he fought the Marcos dictatorship since his days as a youthful opposition assemblyman.

Reports say that 10 days ago, Sen. Mar Roxas, grandson of one of the LP founders, the late President Manuel Roxas, gathered the House LPs to ask them not to rock the boat. He reportedly argued that by 2007 Drilon would no longer be a senator and he would then be the logical party leader. But 21 House LPs still showed up last Thursday. Reports also indicate that up to the last minute, leaders like Rep. Danny Suarez were trying to convince Roxas to become chair, but he was not ready to break away from the Senate group of four LPs.

'Free 4 All' for a free media

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"FREE 4 ALL" IS BOTH THE NAME AND SLOGAN of a campaign to keep the media free. "Free for all" is also a phrase meant to describe a brawl, or an undisciplined, unstructured process. "*Labo-labo*" might be the Filipino equivalent.

The launch of the "Free 4 All" campaign—including the public introduction of 10 women "advocates" from a cross-section of occupations, persuasions and beliefs—threatened to turn into a "free for all" when a TV reporter raised the question of whether the group was demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo as well. In keeping with the "diverse" nature of the "flawless elements" in the all-women line-up, it turned out the group was about evenly split in opinion. But while the women may simply agree to disagree on the "Gloria option," they were all united in the belief that the media be kept truly free, independent, open and responsible.

Invited by Isis International-Manila, an international feminist NGO active in women's advocacy in the media, to lend their names and faces to the campaign were: multimedia artist Cynthia Alexander, grass-roots community leader Lina Bacalando, academic and former NCRFW chair Aurora Javate de Dios, feminist health advocate Sylvia Estrada Claudio, artist and environmental advocate Chin Chin Gutierrez, homemaker Mavic Diy Lee, student Erika Sales, journalist Olive Tripon, lawyer Riza Faith Ybañez, and this columnist.

Guest speaker at yesterday's launch was magazine editor Jo Ann Maglipon, who was one of the women journalists "invited" by military authorities in the 1980s. Maglipon bemoaned what she called the "slow death for all forms of expression" nowadays, with a creeping repression constricting not just the news media but other forms of expression as well, including entertainment and the arts.

"There are no leftists in this assault," reminded Maglipon. "We are all writers now."

* * *

SOME might have been wondering what all the fuss was about, since the President had "lifted" Proclamation 1017 even as the launch was ongoing.

But the threat against the media remains. PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao has already stated that even after 1017 is lifted, the "guidelines" for responsible media practice will remain in force. And the police will remain the primary enforcers of these "guidelines," none of which have been made public, by the way.

There are also reports of police officials meeting with industry organizations to draft these guidelines or codes, which would presumably then be applied by way of "self-regulation."

"Self-regulation" was a favorite catchphrase during martial law, with media owners (almost all of whom were cronies of the Marcoses) denying any censorship was being practiced as their staffs monitored the contents of their own publications and stations. They might have been "free" to regulate themselves, but were they free to pursue the truth?

Indeed, as an INQUIRER editorial pointed out, the media are most responsible when they are left alone to do their job. The prime values of the profession—accuracy, objectivity, disinterest, balance and good taste—are best enforced by journalists themselves. And it is only by getting all information they need to make informed decisions can members of the public become responsible citizens. "Free 4 All" is as much for our audience as it is for us practitioners.

* * *

A WELCOME break from all the controversies and protests of the past few days was the lunch hosted by HSBC CEO Warner Manning at his home.

The event was to launch the children's book "Of Jars and Weaves, Terraces and Beads: Icons of our Living Culture," which, it is hoped, would "help Filipino children rediscover the greatness and legacy of their heritage."

Featured in the book are seven stories based on seven "cultural icons" which, anthropologist F. Landa Jocano says, prove that there was an existing, complex culture among Filipinos even before the arrival of the Spaniards. The seven icons are: the rice terraces that show the ingenious irrigation and planting system of early Filipinos as well as their capacity for organized communal labor; *ikat* or abaca weaving that proves Filipinos' skill in arts and crafts; mummification, which shows their knowledge of chemistry and the sciences; glass beads from China and India, which represent pre-Hispanic Filipino society's trade relations with foreigners; the *balanghai* (which displayed our skill in boat making); the Laguna copper plate, which proves that early Filipinos used a form of syllabary writing; and the Manunggul jar (which contained the bones of the deceased) to represent a worldview and belief in the afterlife.

Noted writers Carla Pacis and Heidi Emily Eusebio-Abad authored the original stories in English, with Filipino translations. Painter and printmaker Jeannie Javelosa made the colorful, child-friendly illustrations.

* * *

IN HER brief on the project, the ebullient Javelosa, representing the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, described it as "a dream project ... to advocate cultural education, to work with groups that are enlightened ... and to find the means to bring it to reality." While HSBC provided the financial "means," and the NCCA coordinated the creative input, the Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, which promotes the reading habit among Filipino children, will ensure that the book reaches the hands of public schoolchildren, committing to distribute some 5,000 copies to 480 public schools nationwide.

To give the guests a "taste" of the book, stage artist Audie Gemora, actor and parenting advocate Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan and "eventologist" Tim Yap read one story each, giving everyone an intriguing glimpse not just of the book but of the richness of our culture.

Nigeria's road to ruin

WORLD VIEW

Ian Bremmer

WITH SO MUCH POLITICAL FRICTION IN IRAN and Iraq, it is easy to overlook the growing unrest in Nigeria, the world's eighth-largest oil exporter. But Nigeria's mounting social and political problems reveal how violence and uncertainty in yet another major energy producer are driving foreign investors out and global oil prices up.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo appears poised to try to amend the country's constitution to allow himself a chance at a third term. To that end, he has marginalized many of his political rivals. Vice President Atiku Abubakar, a likely presidential aspirant in 2007, has been harassed and isolated. Ministers suspected of less than full loyalty have been sidelined.

But Obasanjo's adversaries have joined the battle, and the president lacks the two-thirds majority needed in both the federal and state legislatures to remain in power after next year. Two former Nigerian presidents, Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Ibrahim Babangida, publicly oppose Obasanjo's constitutional meddling, and several governors of Nigeria's Muslim-dominated northern states have made clear that they are determined to see Obasanjo off when his term expires in 2007.

As a result, the uncertainty surrounding Obasanjo's plans is increasing sectional tensions. At stake is the cohesion of a state that many argue is yet another example of an artificial nation cobbled together by Europeans who did not understand their creation's social, tribal and religious forces.

Northern governors oppose a third term for Obasanjo because they believe it is now their turn to choose Nigeria's president under a deal, struck with their southern counterparts when democracy was introduced in 1999, for regional rotation of the presidency. Southern governors argue that control of the presidency should remain with the south for years to come, because the north controlled the country during more than three decades of dictatorship.

Indeed, even southern governors who are not reliable Obasanjo allies appear determined to maintain their influence within the central government by ensuring that the country's next president is a southerner. For the moment, Obasanjo offers them their best opportunity to realize that goal. Last December, 16 of Nigeria's 17 southern governors signed the "Enugu Declaration" in support of the constitutional amendment that would permit him a third term.

This is a bad time for Nigeria's federal government to face these distractions. The Niger Delta region, home to most of Nigeria's oil and many of its poor people, is in turmoil. In October 2004, violence in the region forced Obasanjo's government to negotiate with militia leader Asari Dokubu, after his men attacked a series of Royal Dutch Shell oil facilities and threatened to "burn down the area." In December 2004, Dokubu's militias took 75 oil workers hostage and forced Shell to shut down about 10 percent of the country's oil supply. Dokubu then forced Obasanjo into a peace deal.

The deal did not last long. After Dokubu renewed threats to oil infrastructure last September, he was arrested on sedition charges and now faces the possibility of execution or life in prison. Dokubu's allies have responded with new attacks. A splinter group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, has claimed credit for several recent attacks and kidnappings of foreign workers, and says it will not retreat until Delta states gain control of the revenue produced by locally extracted oil.

There are also fears that the splintering of Dokubu's militias has created fertile ground in the Delta for Islamist groups. A few weeks ago, a previously unknown organization called "The Martyr's Brigade" claimed credit for attacks on Delta pipelines, raising concerns among multinationals that mercenary resistance in the region is becoming ideological.

Whatever the motivations of the various groups, a surge of militia attacks and kidnappings over the past several weeks has now shut down roughly 20 percent of Nigeria's oil exports and killed dozens of people. Shell has closed key facilities in the Delta after the abduction of several workers. Once a verdict is reached in Dokubu's trial, probably this summer, violence is expected to intensify.

In addition, religious violence sparked by the Danish cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammed ripped through Nigeria in February. Angry Muslim and Christian mobs burned churches and mosques, killing dozens of people in a series of attacks and reprisals that have deepened the sectional divide between the Muslim north and the Christian south.

If all this turmoil weren't enough, the discovery of avian flu in the northern provinces further undermines political stability. Obasanjo has called on Muslim farmers in the area to cull their birds, a key source of protein in a region where malnutrition is a constant threat.

In some ways, Nigeria is plagued with the same problems facing Iraq. Various ethnic and religious groups, based in different regions, are battling for oil revenue and political clout. As in Iraq, the conflict could provoke large-scale bloodletting.

Yet, unlike Iraq, Nigeria has a recent history of relatively stable democratic governance. The country's factions each have good reason to compromise before the conflict comes to a head. Northern governors could, for example, offer the southern states a larger share of Nigeria's oil revenue in exchange for their support for a northern president.

But achieving such a compromise won't be a smooth or predictable process. On the contrary, the risks of extended political instability and further large-scale disruptions to Nigeria's oil output will remain high, at a time when the world can least afford it.

Project Syndicate

Ian Bremmer is president of Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. He is a columnist for The Financial Times and teaches at Columbia University.

Snatched!

YOUNG BLOOD

Chris Daniel Loza

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

IT WAS FUNNY—IN A WAY. IT REMINDED ME OF THOSE slapstick comedies where the bad guy gets whacked in the end.

It happened a few afternoons ago. I was killing time in one of the coffee chains, reading a good book. At the table in front of me were two women who came with a foreigner. They had placed their valuables on the vacant chairs. Two unremarkable guys entered and stood between my table and their table, acting as if they were waiting for one to be vacated. Then one of the guys let slip a P20 bill, and when the women stooped down to pick it up, in a split-second, the guys snatched their bags.

The women sprang to their feet, shouting: "*Hoy, mama!* Bag *namin!*" One of the women grabbed one of the snatchers as the foreigner struggled to his feet to go after them. Fortunately, the women's voices were so loud that everyone, including the guard, heard them, and so one of the snatchers was caught with a bag, now placed inside an even bigger bag, in his hands.

What followed next was like a typical scene in sitcoms where the bad guys apologize profusely and the hero whacks them. One of the women said, "*Lahat ng tao dito nagpapakahirap maghanapbuhay tapos ikaw nanakawin mo lang* (Everyone here is having a hard time trying to earn a living, and you rob us just like that)." She followed this up with a whack on the snatcher's shoulder.

When the guard asked the women if they would be pressing charges, the woman said, "Of course! He should be jailed, otherwise what's going to stop him from doing it again?"

Seeing that he was in deep trouble, the snatcher began to apologize again. "Ma'am, sorry *na po*," he pleaded. "Sorry, *talaga po. Nagkamali lang ako ng kuha. Hindi ko po sinasadya* (I'm truly sorry. I grabbed the wrong item. I didn't mean to do it)."

A lapse in judgment? Haven't I heard that before? Haven't I seen somebody with a forlorn face apologizing for a lapse in judgment on national TV lately? But up to now, she has gotten away with her "mistake."

The sad truth is, Filipinos can be forgiving and we forgive the wrong people. Sometimes we quickly forgive so we can get on with our lives. We forgive and we justify our action by saying it is only natural for human beings to commit sin. And we forgive most easily the rich and the influential. We especially let people with money and power get away with their sins and accept their simple, insincere apologies, believing their crimes to be a lapse in judgment, as if all their lives they've lived immaculately and this lapse in judgment is an isolated aberration in their very moral lives.

But the words of the woman on national TV betrayed her. It wasn't something like an accidental, stupid mistake that she did. Judgment presupposes thinking, and shows she intended to rob the Filipino people of their real choice. Perhaps if she said, "Oops! I did it again!" and went to Mars instead of saying that she had committed a lapse in judgment, she could have been forgiven her stupid mistake, even if that would make her—a US-educated economist—look dumb. But in an attempt to demonstrate that she was in control of the situation, she owned up to her mistake and thus, admitted that she wanted to make sure she would keep her one-million vote lead over her nearest rival.

No one will know for sure how many politicians said "Hello, Garci" on the phone. And even if Virgilio Garcillano had given all the names of the politicians who called him, we can't expect everyone to apologize unless each of them had been wiretapped talking to the election official. Indeed, no one will apologize for a lapse in judgment that no one knows about unless he is dying and has nothing more to lose (except, perhaps, a crack at eternal happiness) or he is writing a tell-all, you're-all-going-down-with-me memoir.

It seems we need more people, and not just those whose personal interests were directly affected, to say: "*Lahat ng tao dito nagpapakahirap maghanapbuhay tapos kayo nanakawin niyo lang!*" These cheaters, these snatchers got away because we have become complacent. Maybe if some physical evidence would turn up to prove that we have been robbed, like a bag or an unopened envelope, we could get our act together. Or maybe if we get whacked in the head, we'd wake up and do something to fix this country.

Chris Daniel Loza, 22, graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University last year with a major in Electronics and Communications Engineering. He passed the board exam last November.

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THEY SAID

Fluid

"I can't be categorical. Everything is so fluid today."
—Former President Corazon Aquino, on whether she would rule out a political alliance with former President Joseph Estrada

Avaricious portrayal

"The CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines) may not have its technical mining jargon but it is in contact with the mass base adversely affected by avaricious mining."
—Archbishop Oscar Cruz reacting to the portrayal of bishops as "ignorant" of the mining industry

Irony and contrast

"Ironically, Edsa I and II were about a moral revolution, hope, love and good government, while President Arroyo's administration is about despair, hate, cheating, lying and stealing."
—House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano

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A dictatorship upon us

WE MUST ALL BE PROTESTING (IN strict adherence to the democratic principles upheld by the first People Power 20 years ago) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a national state of emergency.

I was a mere seven-month-old baby when that wonderful, bloodless uprising succeeded in overthrowing the Marcos dictatorship. (I therefore could not have felt the hardships that our nation then endured under that regime.) But, today, I am convinced that GMA's "national state of emergency" is as bad as—if not worse than—martial law.

Warrantless arrests. Violent dispersal of peaceful rallies. Prohibition of rallies. Threats of government takeover of media outfits and vital industries. Police raids on newspaper offices. These are scenes reminiscent of Marcos' rule. We, therefore, should not be saying that martial law is just at hand, for it is now really upon us.

In the movie "Innocent Voices," a priest beaten by Salvadoran authorities said: "Today brothers, it is not enough to pray."

We want a dictator ousted, we should do something to oust her. *Nasa Diyos ang awa, nasa tao ang gawa.* (God helps only those who help themselves.)

Someone said: "History doesn't repeat itself but man repeats his errors." Let us expect that GMA and her allies will do everything to stay in power. We're tolerating them anyway, as a vast majority of our people "tolerated," albeit grudgingly, the Marcos dictatorship for almost 15 years. Unless we act today to stop these Marcosian, if not Nazi-minded "leaders," we might as well expect the worst. Where truth becomes lie, and lie becomes truth, and light is called darkness, and darkness, light, to paraphrase the Good Book.

One last thing, we must all remember that if we do not speak against oppression or injustice, it should not surprise us if the next tongue that will be clipped is ours.

—DAVID MICHAEL SAN JUAN,
president, Student Government-Supreme Student Council,
Bulacan State University,
City of Malolos, Bulacan

Unsafe SLEX stretch

FOR OVER A YEAR NOW, THE STRETCH along the Makati side of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) from Zobel Roxas Street to Edsa has been without street lights.

Reported snatchings and muggings are becoming rampant every day in this stretch, and the victims are mostly hapless students of a nearby computer school and passersby frequenting this busy thoroughfare.

There is now an ongoing project to beautify this portion of the SLEX. But this will just go to naught if Juan de la Cruz remains unsafe here. The concerned government authorities should replace immediately those busted street lights.

—PEDRO REFUERZO JR.,
6737 Taylo St., Makati City

Good-mannered Filipinos with right values

I AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION EXpressed in the Feb. 10 editorial about our present-day society's drift toward selfishness. Of course, there are still those who are well-mannered, helpful, respectful of elders, etc. But those who do not know good manners and right conduct seem to be increasing in number. Many of them are actually good at heart—I could sense this from those I have encountered—but it is sad that they do not know how to manifest their goodness.

My guess is that, in the environment where they grew up, they have never been taught how to be good. Here is where the family comes in as the first school and the first society that a human being encounters. Everything that the child sees in the family is going to influence him for the rest of his life. It contributes to the formation of his character.

If the formation is wrong, it will take strong will on his part to reform himself. Currently, in our society, there are strong and influential forces which are trying to destroy the family. To destroy the family is to destroy society because members of society come from families.

I hope that the INQUIRER, as an influential media organization, will help protect the family, specifically in the aspect of child-rearing. Teaching children good manners and right conduct is the obligation of parents, as much as it is their right and privilege. They have a right and it's their privilege to raise their children according to social traditions and to their moral and religious beliefs. The state, under ordinary circumstances, should not arrogate unto itself the power to wean away the children from the right of parents to inculcate in them the right values.

No school should force on our children subjects, such as sex, which are too radical a topic for their immature mind. Such subjects, coupled with the current drift toward consumerism and materialism, only promote selfishness and the rule of the jungle. Ironically, some animals in the "forest jungle" are more caring than the animals in our "cement jungle" when it comes to attending to their respective species.

—BELLAFLOR P. GONZALES,
bpgonzales@yahoo.com

Cases on Forbes Park restrictions still pending

THE FORBES PARK ASSOCIATION (FPA) wishes to clarify the circumstances surrounding the recent decision of the Makati courts purportedly lifting the Deed of Restrictions on the land titles of some Forbes Park homeowners with property along McKinley Road. We do this in the interest of presenting the whole picture of the case, of which some facts Victor C. Agustin failed to mention in his March 1 column.

The owners claim that the Deed of Restrictions has expired. This runs counter to an earlier Court of Appeals ruling affirming a decision by the Home Insurance Guaranty Corp., extending the Forbes Park Deed of Restrictions to Jan. 1, 2024. This decision had become final and executory. As such, the basis for the cases filed by the homeowners was without basis.

Secondly, when the case was filed, the FPA was not made a party to the case as a respondent. Neither was the FPA notified despite its clear interest in and involvement in the cases. Since there was no notification, these cases could not be contested by a fundamentally important party. Thus, there was an infirmity in the proper execution of basic due process.

Citing the lack of basis and the infirmity of the process, the FPA has petitioned the Court of Appeals to annul the decision of the Makati courts on grounds of extrinsic fraud. These cases remain pending to this day.

The FPA will exert all measures and take all actions necessary to defend the will of the majority of the homeowners to maintain and keep Forbes Park a low-density community.

—SYLVIA LOPEZ ALEJANDRO,
president,
Forbes Park Association, Makati City

Inappropriate photo?

AFTER READING THE NEWS ITEM "MORE initial aid coming," (PDI, 2/21/06) I found the accompanying photo of the three nuns taking pictures on ground zero in Ginsaugon totally inappropriate. The photo gave the impression that the nuns went to the disaster-struck region only for a holiday.

A photo of people praying for the safety and recovery of the victims would have been better than the one showing the nuns with smiles on their faces, as if ridiculing the hard-working Taiwanese on the photo beside it.

—WILLIAM H.,
c/o philippine@rueyshing.com

The nuns did their share of helping and praying, and they were just taking time out. Give them a break.—Ed.

Help

PLEASE HELP THE ART COMMUNITY. THE forgery of paintings is once again rampant.

Recently, right in the UST Art School Gallery, fake Kiukok drawings were exhibited. Why do I say "fake"? Because I have the original of those Kiukok drawings.

I saw several fake Malangs brought to my studio in West Avenue for authentication. With the help of the INQUIRER, we can stop or minimize the forgery of artworks. Calling all art collectors, government officials, gallery owners, etc.

—MALANG

Glorious stories

WE THANK THE INQUIRER FOR PUBLISHING the Edsa I stories to mark the 20th anniversary of that historic event.

It was indeed a glorious past for the Filipinos and I hope it would forever inspire and light the way for the future.

More power to the INQUIRER and to INQ7.net!

—THELMA BELTRAN SIM,
tlbsim@hotmail.com

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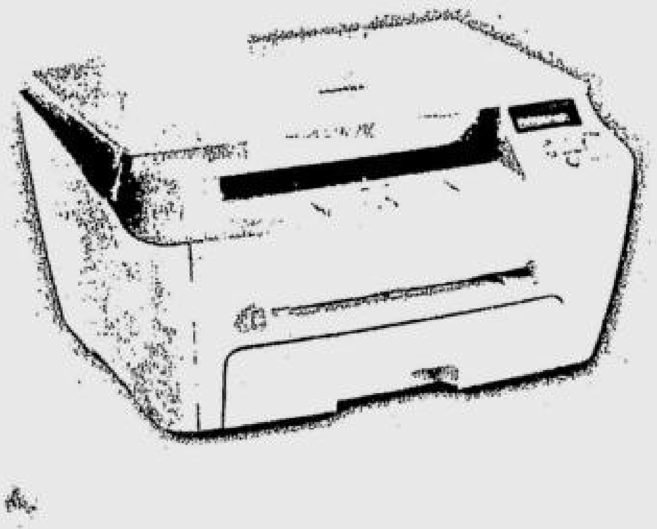

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INQUIRER Visayas

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Coconut shell used in making furniture

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City

AFTER THE POPULAR virgin coconut oil and the award-winning "coconet" comes the coco shell board.

Living up to its reputation as a tree of multiple uses, the coconut has shown that the shell of its nuts can also be used as wood materials for dining tables, chairs, sala sets, cabinets, frames and other similar products.

Businessman Domingo Ramirez, 48, discovered the latest use of the lowly "bagol" (coconut shell), which usually ends up as charcoal, cooking fuel or handicraft material.

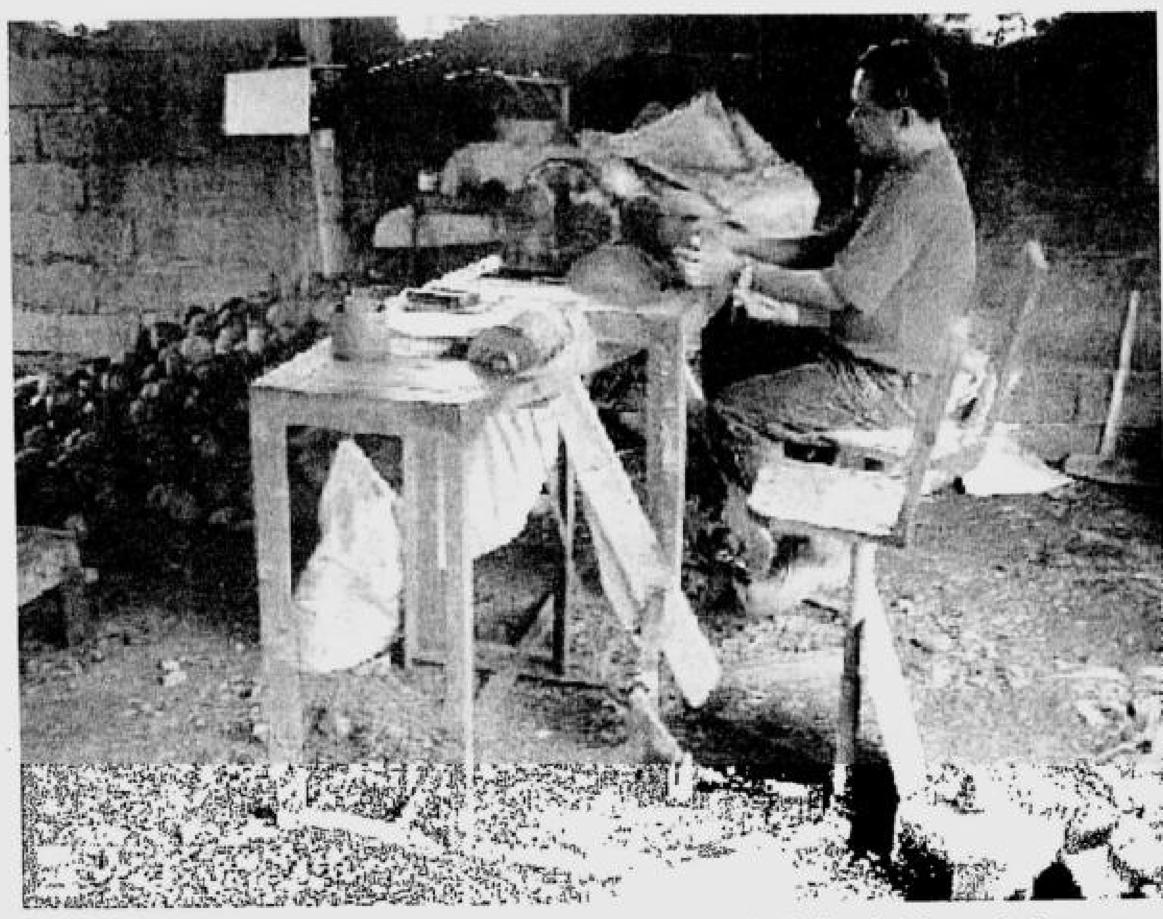
"The coconut shell board is really durable," Ramirez said. So far, he has already created a dining table and chair, panels and boards from coconut shells.

Experts in a state university in Tacloban City have tested the product for strength, permeability and hardness, he said.

He said he had received orders for coco shell board panels and tiles for making furniture pieces, bar counters, and flooring for an indoor basketball court, but these had been politely refused.

Ramirez explained that although it had been about five years since he started experimenting on the new product, he could not yet produce the coco shell boards in commercial volume due to lack of capital.

He said his group had acquired coco shell crushers and cleaners, and a mixer worth more than P200,000, which would remove the fibers left on husked shells, pound the shells to powder, and treat the shell powder with some chemicals.


DOMINGO Ramirez pedals the coconut shell cleaner as he cleans the shell at their factory in Barangay Diit, Tacloban City. VEN LABRO

Patent

Ramirez said he got a government patent for the coco shell board in March 2004.

Now, the imaginative entrepreneur is working on some designs for dining table and chairs at a shop on a vacant lot at Barangay Diit, 8 km from the city proper.

"What we have is a backyard operation," said mechanical engineer Enrique Sucaldito, 68, who retired from an equipment firm in Manila and now serves as a consultant of Ramirez in the coco shell board business.

Sucaldito owns the property where the improvised factory stands. Ramirez mixes the powdered shells and chemicals in a workroom at the right side of the shop, while outside the enclosed area, metal worker Laurentino Epil makes iron molds for a dining chair.

Sucaldito said he believed that their product could help the country's economy, provide jobs to people in the rural areas and help preserve the environment.

"Just imagine how many trees could be saved by using coconut shell instead of wood. People can also earn extra income by gathering and selling coconut shells," he said.

His son, Socrates, has invested P200,000 into the venture. "We thought the P200,000 was a sufficient amount for us to go into commercial production of coco shell boards, but it was just enough for the procurement of the machineries," Sucaldito said.

Wood substitute

Ramirez said he got the idea of making a coconut shell board when he saw an old coconut shell that had been polished and blackened from years of being buried, but still used as a container.

"It entered my mind that the coconut shell can be made into a strong material that is a substitute for wood," said Ramirez.

He said it took him two years to perfect the process of making coco shell boards.

At present, Ramirez owns and manages three calling stations, a public vehicle and a fish cage. His extra time he devotes to their plant in Barangay Diit, 10 km from his house in Barangay San Jose on the outskirts of the city.

Wanted: Investors

Ramirez said his income was just enough for his family and he did not have enough money to launch his invention commercially.

He said he tried but failed to get the support of government agencies, like the regional offices of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology, as well as some politicians and businessmen.

The government agencies required them to submit a lot of documents, he said. In some cases, his presence was needed in Manila, which meant shouldering transportation, and board and lodging expenses.

Despite their predicament, Ramirez, Sucaldito and Epil continue to work in the factory, hoping that someday their novel idea will benefit many Filipinos.

DR. LEO Avila and Francisco "Toti" Juan of the Chicago Reef Gala Committee, break bread with Apo Island barangay captain Mario Pascobello (right). ALEX PAL

Fil-Ams build bakery for Apo Island residents

By Alex V. Pal
Apo Island, Dauin, Negros Oriental

FISH USUALLY COMES TO mind when one thinks about food on Apo Island.

With reason. After all, the 74-hectare island barangay off the town of Dauin in Oriental Negros has made a name for itself as the world's first model of a community-managed coral reef.

But while the residents have their fill of fish almost every day, they had long wondered how it would be like to eat fresh, hot bread baked right in their own community.

That dream remained until Jan. 31 last year when a bakery rose from a vacant lot near the shore.

"Now, we can eat *hot pan de sal!*" barangay captain Mario Pascobello enthused as the first pieces of bread rolled out of the oven.

Soon, other kinds of bread were made –*ensaymada*, loaves, *pan de español*, *pan de coco*, and 16 more.

"This is a big thing for the islanders because people, especially those who had lived for a while in Manila, acquired the taste for bread and now look for it every morning," said Pablina Cadiz, a Silliman University biologist.

Money for the construction of the bakery and the purchase of an oven, mixer and generator worth P180,000 came from a $10,000 fund raised by the Philippine Reef Gala Committee, a group of Filipinos living in Chicago, Illinois.

Love at first sight

Most of the 28 members of the organization had not even heard of Apo Island until 2002, when the Shedd Aquarium of Chicago, after visiting various coral reefs around the world, decided to replicate the Philippine model as a permanent exhibit.

It was love at first sight. "Our group was created spontaneously after we saw the beauty of the underwater life of Apo Island," said Francisco "Toti" Juan, a travel agent and executive director of the University of the Philippines Alumni Foundation in the United States, who heads the group.

The Filipino-Americans and their friends thought of supporting the Shedd Aquarium and the Apo community in an effort to counter bad publicity about the Philippines.

Juan said the group decided to raise funds to support educational and livelihood opportunities for the islanders. The money, managed by Silliman University, was to be spent on projects decided upon by the residents themselves.

Aside from the bakery, the funds were tapped to send five youths to high school and two to college. Under the agreement, the college scholars will take biology, education or other courses that can help improve the quality of life on the island.

After the first year of operation, the bakery, managed by the Women's Association of Apo Island, netted a profit of P24,421.52.

Satisfied

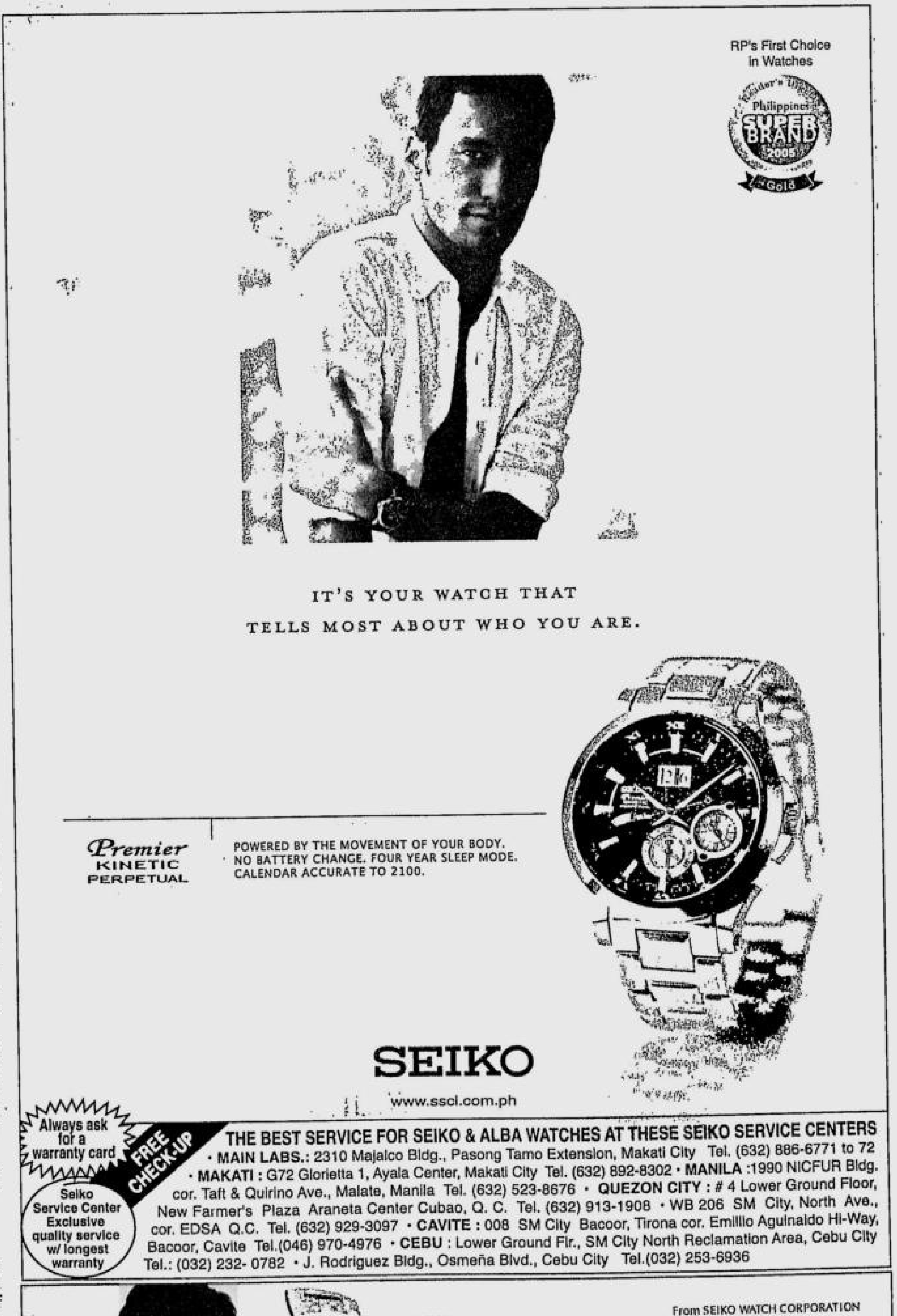
Juan and Dr. Leo Avila, a member of the Philippine Reef Gala Committee, visited Apo in January and, upon hearing the progress of their efforts, decided to donate $10,000 more.

"We are very satisfied," said Juan, a former professor at the UP College of Business Administration.

He said they would again visit the island in two years in time for the graduation of their scholars.

Juan said many people in the United States want to help the Philippines but just don't know how.

With this experience, Juan and other members of his group hope to prove that, although it may not be possible to help the entire country, they can make a difference by helping one town or one barangay at a time.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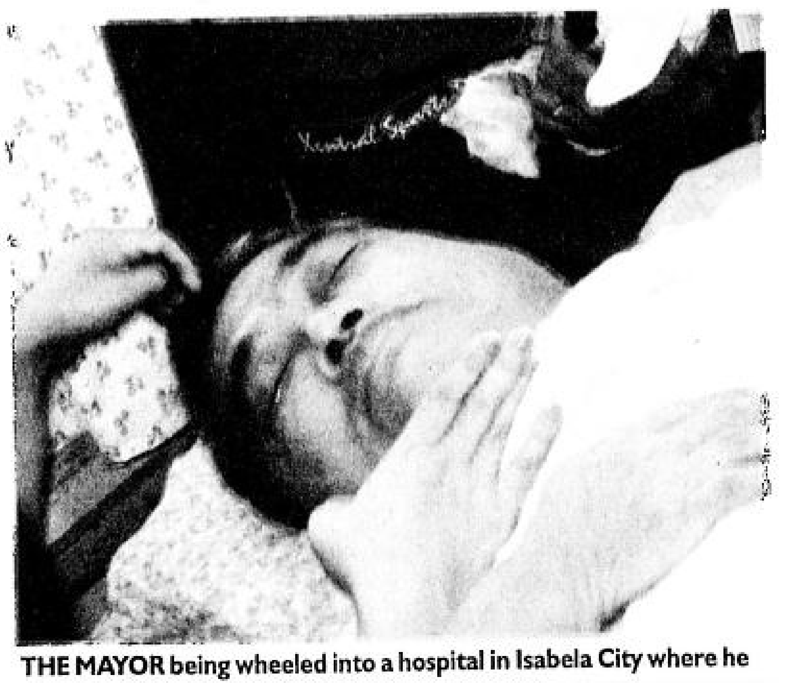
Basilan mayor slain in gun attack

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Mayor Luis Biel II of Isabela City in Basilan died after an attack by a lone gunman around noon yesterday, police authorities said.


THE MAYOR being wheeled into a hospital in Isabela City where he died after a gun attack.
RAYMOND LINTAG/CONTRIBUTOR

Senior Insp. William Gadayan, Isabela City police chief, said four people, including one of Biel's security escorts, were also injured in the attack.

Gadayan said Biel was leaving the city hall compound when the suspect, armed with a .38 caliber revolver, started firing at the executive.

He said Biel's security aides fired back and killed the attacker in the process.

The mayor was then rushed to the Basilan provincial hospital but died there 20 minutes later.

Biel died from two bullet wounds in the back.

Dr. Nilo Barandino, provincial health chief, said the bullets pierced Biel's major arteries.

"It was a well planned attack. The gunman was determined to kill the mayor. He was even ready to die," Gadayan said.

He said the police were still trying to establish the identity of the suspect.

"We were having a difficulty in identifying him because we did not recover any identification (documents). His face was also badly deformed because of bullet wounds," Gadayan said.

Gadayan said the police were also trying to determine what could be the possible motive behind the mayor's assassination.

He said among the leads they were pursuing was Biel's order to demolish a mosque near the Isabela City seaport.

The demolition order was being opposed by residents but Biel had managed to secure a court approval in October last year.

He offered to build a mosque in another area, but residents said the proposed site was too far from where they lived.

The slain mayor planned to turn the area into a trading center for marine products. *Julie Alipala with a report from Rolly San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Napocor barge unchecked before setting out to sea

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

SEMIRARA ISLAND, ANTIQUE—A power barge of the National Power Corp. that spilled more than 300,000 liters of oil into waters, mangrove forests and corals off Semirara Island was unchecked for seaworthiness before it was allowed to set out to sea.

THE CLEANUP of spilled oil in mangrove forests near Semirara Island continues.
PDI PHOTO

A Senate committee investigating what had been described as the country's biggest oil spill got admission that only a surveyor from the GSIS, the barge's insurer, checked the barge before it was allowed to leave port.

The committee on environment, chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano, got the admission from Napocor chief Cyril del Callar in a hearing Tuesday.

The barge was being towed when it overturned Dec. 19 because of huge waves and strong winds.

"Did Napocor allow the barge to leave Masbate despite the bad weather knowing for a fact that a barge is unfit to travel at such weather conditions?" Cayetano asked.

The Coast Guard said while the cleanup of the spill was nearly 33 percent complete, much has to be done.

Capt. Arturo Olavario, head of the field operations group of the Coast Guard's Task Force Semirara, said the cleanup has covered 37 hectares of the estimated 112 hectares of mangrove forests around the island.

Studies made by researchers from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) said the area damaged by the spill was 112 hectares.

Dr. Rex Sadaba, a mangrove expert and head of the UPV team of researchers, said the oil spill damaged 97.64 hectares of old growth mangrove and 10.97 hectares of reforested areas. The rest are natural grown forests.

The cleanup, which started on Dec. 21, involves 23 Coast Guard personnel and around 250 residents of the island.

They have collected more than 25,000 sacks of contaminated material.

The 5,045-hectare island is part of a group of nine islands of Caluya at the northern tip of Panay Island. It is the site of the SMC, the biggest coal mine in Asia.

The Coast Guard said 364,120 liters of bunker fuel were spilled when the barge ran aground 200 meters off Sitio Bobog in Barangay Semirara.

The barge was carrying about 874,570 liters of bunker fuel.

Sadaba said the extent of the damage and the long-term impact on the mangroves and marine life can only be determined after a comprehensive study.

He said based on similar spills in other countries, the recovery of mangroves may take 10 to 50 years.

'Jueteng' makes return in 2 Nueva Vizcaya towns

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Gambling lords have succeeded in reviving illegal gambling operations in at least two towns in this province this week.

Jueteng bet collectors on Wednesday were spotted doing the rounds in some villages here and in nearby Solano town, which sources described as "dry-run" operations before activities expand to other towns.

The resurgence came barely a month after jueteng operations here were stopped when an anti-illegal gambling task force from the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame raided a gambling den in Solano on Jan. 17.

"[Operators] started with this dry run to test the waters. When operations go smoothly, bet collection will follow in smaller towns," a police source said.

The source's statement was confirmed through text messages by several INQUIRER sources, including two bet collectors who asked not to be named.

The police source expressed concern that the police might become an object of ridicule because jueteng staged a comeback here at a time when the police were supposed to be on a heightened alert due to the declaration of a state of national emergency.

But Senior Supt. Rogelio Damazo, acting provincial police director, dismissed allegations that the latest revival of jueteng here had the blessings of local and police officials.

He said he has given instructions to all chiefs of police to arrest people involved in illegal gambling and file charges in court.

ROUNDUP

Pacquiao's treat

...PARA SA 'YO ANG BURGER NA 'TO...

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Featherweight boxing idol Manny Pacquiao treated 700 poor children here to snacks on Feb. 27. The children, accompanied by their parents or guardians, waited for about four hours not necessarily to get free burgers and drinks but to catch a glimpse of their ring idol. Many arrived as early as 9 a.m. to queue for the 11 a.m. activity. But Pacquiao arrived about 1 p.m. He apologized for the delay, claiming he had previous engagements. Pacquiao personally distributed burgers and drinks to the children. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Alert vs trafficking

DUMAGUETE CITY—Dumaguete Bishop John Du asked Catholics to be vigilant amid the trafficking of children and women in the country. "Trafficking is a modern day slavery that deserves widespread attention," Bishop Du said in a pastoral letter. Scores of potential victims were spotted in transit areas such as airports, ports and bus terminals, and hundreds more were being rescued from prostitution, servitude and bonded labor, the letter said. Du called on the Catholic faithful to be aware and vigilant of their rights under Republic Act 9209 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Business plan wins

DUMAGUETE CITY—The team from the Asian College of Science and Technology here recently won the Business Plan of the Year award in the 2006 Oriental Negros Innovation Awards for their Automated Rice Seedbed Protection (ARSP). The ARSP won over four business plans from other schools, which were a mosquito trap, charcoal briquettes, a prepaid Internet purchase card, and a sensor system with SMS-based notification. The ARSP is an electronically controlled seedbed that uses sensors to regulate heat and moisture to create an environment conducive to the growth of the seedlings. The ACSAT team won P50,000, which is intended as seed money to start their business. *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Drive vs stray dogs

LEGAZPI CITY—In its drive against rabies, the City Veterinary Services Office here has offered a broiler chicken, locally known as "kabir," and a duck in exchange for a stray dog which its owner would surrender to the city pound. City veterinarian Nancy Andes said the new livelihood-related scheme was adopted to restrain the spread of rabies in the northern barangays of the city where at least 10 persons have been bitten by a rabid dog. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

4 minors charged

LEGAZPI CITY—Four male minors, aged 9 to 13, were charged Friday with attempted robbery after they were caught inside the premises of the PSBank branch here last week. The four street kids, whose identities were withheld, barged into the bank's ATM counter but panicked upon hearing the alarm. Two of them suffered bruises and lacerations when they broke the glass door to escape. The boys have been placed under the custody of the City Social Welfare and Development Office. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mayon subsides

LEGAZPI CITY—Mayon Volcano has simmered down with only four volcanic quakes as of 6 a.m. on Feb. 25. Ed Laguerta, of the Lingnon Hill Observatory here, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology continued to observe the volcano as it revived its monitoring devices installed on the slopes of the mountain. While Alert Level 2 stays, Phivolcs warned that the 6 km permanent danger zone stays. *Ed Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cop dead in gunfight

TARLAC CITY—A policeman was killed while another was wounded in a gunfight with armed men along the Barangay San Rafael portion of MacArthur Highway here on March 1. Police said SPO3 Francisco Pestaño and Chief Insp. Tomas Frias, both members of the police's traffic management group (TMG), flagged down a jeep at 9 a.m. to check if it was the vehicle commandeered by three men in Capas town. The policemen approached the driver and asked if he had picked up three men in Barangay Talaga in Capas. When the driver said yes, they proceeded to inspect the passengers. At that point, Pestaño shouted, "*Baril, may baril*, sir (Gun, he's got a gun, sir)!" and a gunfight ensued. Pestaño died instantly while Frias was wounded and taken to a local hospital. *Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Donation for Leyte

BAGUIO CITY—Sun Life Financial, an international insurance company, launched the Tabang Leyte project here last week and donated Canadian $50,000 to victims of the Southern Leyte landslides. The donation was made under the company's "Sagip 111," a series of initiatives on education, poverty alleviation and other needs of various communities in the country. Sun Life officials also donated P25,000 under its "Sagip Kabataan" project, to the Lift Up Baguio, an organization of businessmen in the city, to help rehabilitate the children's playground in Burnham Park. *Donna Demetillo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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NPA land mine kills 2 cops in Puerto Galera

From page A1

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao denounced the attack as a violation of international conventions prohibiting use of land mines in warfare.

About a dozen cops were on their way back to the town center from a cell site they had secured in Puerto Galera, home to some of the most beautiful beaches in the country, when their truck hit the land mine, a police report said.

"While on their way to return to their base ... they were ambushed by ... suspected NPA using a land mine," the report said. "Upon impact, three were immediately killed."

Police identified those killed as PO1 Roderick Padojinog, PO1 Amormio Baticos and driver Leonardo Caube.

Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal congratulated the guerrillas belonging to NPA's Lucio de Guzman Command for the successful attack.

But Rosal said it was unfortunate that a civilian was killed.

In one of their biggest attacks in recent years, the NPA, also using land mines, killed nine soldiers and wounded 23 others in Iloilo last November.

Violation of int'l laws

The NPA had previously said the land mines it was using in combat were those that were command-generated and not the contact-detonated types banned by international conventions.

"Whatever land mine (is used) is actually in violation of international laws," Pagdilao said. "The character of a land mine is that when it explodes, it does not discriminate whether you are a combatant or an ordinary civilian—that is why it is outlawed."

"The use by the NPA of land mines is clearly deplorable, and is in violation of international laws," he said.

Response to 1017

The Philippine Campaign to Ban Land Mines, a nongovernmental group which monitors violations in the use of land mines, has said in a statement that what is banned by the Ottawa Treaty of 1997 are anti-personnel mines or those which are victim-activated or contact-detonated.

"These are inherently indiscriminate, i.e., (they) do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Not yet banned are command-detonated anti-personnel mines which are controllable for legitimate use against military targets. Not (yet) banned either are anti-vehicle or anti-tank mines, whether command-detonated or contact-detonated," the anti-land mines group said.

The police said they expected more attacks by the NPA in line with a recent directive of Jose Maria Sison, the communist leader living in exile in the Netherlands.

"That is why the Chief PNP has reminded our forces throughout the country to remain vigilant in the face of this order by Joma Sison," Pagdilao said.

Reaction to 1017

In a press statement posted on the CPP-NPA website last Feb. 26, the rebels said they had launched several tactical offensives in response to Ms Arroyo's Proclamation No. 1017, which she issued on Feb. 24. She lifted the proclamation yesterday.

"The NPA carried out at least seven tactical offensives yesterday in response to a directive from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) to intensify tactical offensives in light of the declaration of Proclamation No. 1017 and contribute to the further weakening of the Arroyo regime," the rebels said on their website on Feb. 26.

The website quoted Rosal as saying that the tactical offensives "reflected the people's determination to put an end to the Arroyo regime."

NPA pledge

The offensives were carried out mainly in the northeast Mindanao region, the rebels said.

Rosal pledged on the website that the NPA "will carry out more and more tactical offensives to weaken her regime and contribute to the people's effort to put an end to her rule."

"The issuance of Proclamation No. 1017 and the establishment of a virtual martial law regime manifest the weakening and isolation of the Arroyo regime," he said. "Her dictatorial rule will not last long as the military and police, the principal instruments to prolong her regime, are utterly divided and fast disintegrating as more and more officials and soldiers turn their backs against Arroyo and as the NPA carries out more and more tactical offensives."

Tactical offensives

He added: "The more frequent and bigger the NPA's tactical offensives are against the pro-Arroyo military and police forces—and the more the anti-Arroyo forces organize their ranks—the easier the anti-Arroyo forces will be able to prevent Arroyo from consolidating her dictatorship," said Rosal.

The CPP-CC, the website said, has directed the NPA "to launch tactical offensives that can be won against diehard pro-Arroyo and fascist units of the reactionary Armed Forces and, whenever the opportunity presents itself, coordinate with the anti-Arroyo and other friendly units within the AFP and PNP."

One of the reasons Malacañang cited for Ms Arroyo's declaration of emergency was an alleged conspiracy between rebel soldiers and leftist insurgents to overthrow her government.

Pursuit operations

Chief Supt. Delfin Genio, Mimaropa police chief, said seven other policemen were unhurt in yesterday's attack.

Genio said the victims, assigned at the Regional Mobile Group (RMG), were on patrol in Sitio Molino, Barangay Talipanan, on board a dump truck when it hit a land mine.

"Our troops were patrolling the area as part of our pursuit operations to run after the rebels who attacked the Globe cell site last week," Genio told the INQUIRER.

He said the rebels, positioned on the roadside, then opened fire at the government troops.

Wounded, overpowered

Genio said despite being overpowered, the policemen were able to shoot back at the rebels who quickly withdrew toward the mountainous region of the area.

"I praise our police officers because they were able to fight back despite being wounded. They were really brave," he said.

STOP PROCLAMA 1017
STOP PROCLAM 1017!

AWAITING ARREST: Reps. Masa, Virador, Mariano, Ocampo and Casino in safe haven at the Batasan. JOAN BONDOC

House-bound Batasan 5 ...

From page A1

tional Police yesterday spelled out the conditions under which the police would move against the five legislators.

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said that as far as the PNP was concerned, the five were already considered "under arrest" and the police would arrest them if they left the House complex without the permission of Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"It's just that their custodian is the Speaker. If they leave without his permission, then that's considered escaping," Pagdilao said.

Warrantless arrests

The PNP has said the rebellion charges against them were an upshot of their alleged involvement in a conspiracy with rightwing soldiers to overthrow Ms Arroyo.

The five lawmakers tried to leave the House premises on Thursday but changed their minds after House sergeant-at-arms Bayani Fabic told them that congressional protection for them applied only for as long as they stayed within the House premises.

"Until now, it is not clear what will happen to us," Mariano said. "It is also not clear whether or not warrantless arrests would continue and whether or not the muzzling of the press would continue."

Mariano also expressed concern about the health of his colleague in the Anakpawis party-list, Rep. Crispin Beltran, who is detained at the Philippine National Police General Hospital.

Beltran suffered a stroke in June 2005 and his doctor has said his condition remains guarded.

Defeating the 'ogre'

"It is not unknown to President Arroyo that there is a Crispin Beltran still suffering inside the PNP General Hospital. It is still not clear what would happen to him," Mariano said.

Mariano said he had received a note from Beltran congratulating the people for successfully opposing Proclamation No. 1017.

"You defeated the ogre PP 1017 in just eight days. With its tail behind its legs, the Arroyo administration took back the proclamation," Beltran's note said in Filipino.

Maza doubted that the situation was back to normal.

"If indeed times are back to normal, threats to our life and liberties, the crackdown on our leaders should stop," Maza said. "Otherwise, Ms Arroyo's lifting of this Draconian measure is as fake as her presidency."

Two options

Casiño said the Arroyo administration was leaving him and the others with only two options—face arrest, or go back to armed struggle.

"But we will not give them that benefit. So it's important that we hold our ground here in Congress, hold fast to our right to representation which they want forcibly taken from us," he said.

Ocampo said it was a historical fact that conservatives or those with military mind-set had been barring progressive groups from participating in the parliamentary arena, a right that is "fundamental to a genuine democratic system of government."

Virador said police harassment had reached a new level.

"The harassment has already been turned toward the members of our staff. (They) are being tailed by members of the PNP as they leave the House of Representatives," Virador said.

The Senate has also adopted a resolution insisting that the five legislators should remain in "the protective custody of Congress" until the preliminary investigation was finished.

Sen. Joker Arroyo Arroyo told the INQUIRER that arresting Ocampo and Beltran would be illegal because "the crime being leveled against them is a crime against Ferdinand Marcos and martial law and not against the present democratic government."

Arroyo was reacting to earlier police statements that in addition to conspiring against the President, Beltran and Ocampo were also being charged in connection with their activities during the martial law years.

Ocampo and Beltran had been amnestied twice.

Arroyo said he found it "mind-boggling" that cases of those who fought Marcos would be revived.

"Everyone who fought Marcos is a hero," he said. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Michael Lim Ubac*

Chilling effect was on cops ...

From page A1

any chilling effect on the media," Pagdilao said, citing the way reporters based in Camp Crame had grilled him day after day during the week the state of national emergency was in effect.

"Did you develop fear? I don't think so. It was I who got afraid every time I faced you, guys. It seemed like it was me who felt this 'chilling effect.'"

"Every time, it seemed like you were going to barbecue me with your questions," he quipped.

A fair media

Turning serious, Pagdilao said the police observed that the media "became more responsible in the exercise of freedom [during the national emergency]."

The police also believed the media had been fair, at least during the past week.

"Fairness is one [thing] we saw. We have been given the same space. The newspapers, all the media outlets, were asking us for interviews to get our side. And there was this insistence to speak out the truth by means of counter-checking with us," Pagdilao added.

Baptism of fire

If there was such a thing as a baptism of fire, the new PNP spokesperson felt he got it during the past week.

Pagdilao assumed his post on Feb. 16. A week later, he found himself at the firing line, facing skeptical and probing media men.

Media organizations saw in President Macapagal-Arroyo's short-lived proclamation and in the raid on the Daily Tribune newspaper offices an attempt to intimidate them into toeing the government line and to muzzle their right to report things the way they saw it.

'Be easy on Lomibao'

At one point during the week, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao threatened to take over media organizations that would not conform to "government standards" in reporting the news.

The raid on the Tribune and threats of more crackdowns sparked editorials criticizing government attempts to trample on press freedom.

One columnist joked that he better "be good to Lomibao" because the PNP chief might end up becoming his publisher one day.

Pagdilao said his phone "was always burning" during the past week.

A hell of a job

On one occasion, he said he had to explain to a reporter why he could not take her calls—he was simply having a difficult time accommodating requests for interviews.

"It is one hell of job," a laughing Pagdilao said yesterday. "You need a lot of patience really. I'm learning. It's just that the timing has really sucked me into this job."

Yesterday was the first time in days that Pagdilao looked relax. He exchanged jokes with reporters.

"You can now smile," he kidded one reporter, after announcing that the police were pulling out their men from the Tribune's editorial offices.

Veteran climber seeks ...

From page A1

have mixed feelings about it. I am happy to be able to do things as planned but at the same time, I'm nervous because of the danger and the pressure [to succeed] because [my climb] has been announced," Garduce said.

At 29,035 feet, Everest is three times the height of Mt. Apo, the Philippines' highest mountain at 9,690 feet. It has claimed numerous lives throughout history, but it has also given fame to those who have conquered it.

Roel Chan, brand manager of North Face, one of Garduce's sponsors together with GMA-7 network, said that a check with the Nepal archives showed that no Filipino has yet attempted to climb Everest, even after the world already marked the 50th year of the first successful climb of Mt. Everest in 1953.

National pride

"It's a matter of national pride as far as Everest is concerned. As for mountaineers, Romi said there's fulfillment in climbing, in pushing your body beyond ordinary limits, and how far the human spirit could take you," Chan said.

He added that Garduce's decision came when he conquered Tibet's Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 feet) in September last year.

On Jan. 1, 2005, he became the first Filipino to climb Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest mountain in the Western hemisphere at 22,831 feet.

Chan said all these accomplishments had made Garduce—who began mountaineering as a hobby in 1991 and started taking mountain climbing seriously in 1998—the Philippines' "highest altitude record holder."

For the Everest climb, Garduce said he would acclimatize himself this month and in April by climbing a lower mountain not far from Mt. Everest together with another Filipino climber, Jon Jon Villareal.

Garduce aims to begin the Everest assault in May, teaming up with other climbers from Europe or America.

More dangerous route

He would be taking the Southeast range, from the Nepal side, called the "Hillary route," named after Edmund Hillary, who conquered Everest with Sherpa guide, Tenzing Norgay, in 1953.

"The history's there, the route has glaciers and it's dangerous. This is probably 10 times more dangerous than Cho-oyu," Garduce said.

He read up and researched about Everest as part of his preparation for the climb, aside from undergoing an endurance training.

But he stopped reading about Everest last January because he said the anxiety attacks started setting in.

"I'd see the slopes in my mind and the anxiety would creep in," he admitted.

Other peaks to conquer

What's next for the Filipino climber, if and when he succeeds in scaling Everest?

Garduce explained: "It's a never-ending quest. Cho-oyu was a big thing, being a death zone altitude. But after one or two months, the feeling was gone. *Bitin eh* (It's hanging). I needed to do something more. Everest would probably be the same. After this, I'll rest for a while, then think of something else. Maybe cross the Sahara. There are more dangerous and more difficult mountains to climb."

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OWWA - Ricardo Chavez
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'CLOSURE' at the demolished village of Guinsaugon marks the start of the long road to healing. REM ZAMORA

Closure rites end search, start healing in St. Bernard

From page A1

But for 15-year-old Maries Arbiol, Lerias' plea was hard to accept and even harder to understand. The fourth-year high school student lost both parents, a brother, a sister and the only home she has ever known. She is alone save for a brother, Jay-R, who's 16.

So alone

"I have been crying since the tragedy. It is hard for me to accept our fate. My brother and I feel so alone. We don't have the strength to live ... without them," she said, her face in tears.

Abiol was among the 98 youngsters orphaned by the tragedy. She and about eight other orphans under the care of Hope Worldwide-Philippines returned to St. Bernard yesterday, lit candles and offered prayers for all those who perished in the mudslide.

Moises Velasco, program manager of Hope Worldwide-Philippines, said it would take at least three months for Abiol and other survivors to "partially overcome their trauma."

"They are still in the grieving phase. And we are helping them recover from the trauma by giving them some psycho-social treatment," he said.

Wooden cross

The rites began at 9 a.m. with a Mass officiated by Bishop Precioso Cantillas of the Diocese of Maasin. A 15-foot wooden cross was erected with the prelate declaring the place as "a place of memorial and prayer where Eucharistic Mass can be celebrated."

Cantillas implored the people not to blame God for the tragedy, because God is "good and merciful ... and He will continue to be good and merciful even if the world and the universe will be gone," the prelate said in his homily.

Two military helicopters flew by, sprinkling holy water and showering the site with flower petals.

"It's a message of love, concern and hope for those who were left behind," Lerias said.

Closure

She said the memorial rites, while symbolically closing the search and retrieval operation, also signaled the start of an effort to rebuild the lives of survivors.

"We have a long way to go. But I told them we can overcome all of this together," Lerias said in an interview after the ceremony that lasted until 1 p.m. yesterday.

Sen. Richard Gordon, who was present as national president of the Philippine National Red Cross, said he hopes the survivors can rebuild their lives as others have after the Mount Pinatubo eruption and the Ormoc tragedy.

As part of the rebuilding effort, Lerias said they would do their best to construct houses for the victims in a 7.2 hectare site in Barangay Magbagakay, around 3 km. from the St. Bernard town proper.

She said the local government was still processing the purchase of the lot that would house the 410 survivors from Guinsaugon and hundreds of other individuals from the neighboring three-and-a-half barangay affected by the mudslide.

Lerias said US Marines had already committed to build temporary shelters, kitchens, toilets and clinics for the victims in the new evacuation site.

More aid

Two weeks after the Southern Leyte tragedy, international aid continues to pour in for the survivors of the Feb. 17 landslide.

A hotel executive and some US servicemen stationed in South Korea had sent "sympathy letters" to the Philippine Embassy in Seoul, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

"I can't express enough how sorry I am for your country's loss," wrote one US soldier, who went unnamed in a DFA statement. "All my prayers are for the families of loved ones who suffered," wrote another.

Japan, Germany

Another consoling letter came from Kyung-Chak Chang, president of the five-star-Lotte Hotel, the DFA said.

The Japanese Embassy yesterday approved the release of an additional P27 million to the Philippine government specifically to build "500 shelters" for the now homeless villagers of Barangay Guinsaugon.

This raised the total Japanese assistance for landslide victims to P38 million, the mission said.

The embassy earlier turned over emergency relief items worth P11 million to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, aside from sending damage-assessment and body identification experts to St. Bernard.

Through its embassy in Manila, the German government said it would provide P3.1 million in aid for the estimated 2,900 evacuees, including not only those directly hit by the Feb. 17 disaster but also families in neighboring villages now deemed facing the same threat.

"The people in the eight evacuation centers benefiting from the German humanitarian assistance include the former residents of Guinsaugon, those from two neighboring villages that were partially affected by the original landslides, and those from villages in the vicinity that have been preemptively evacuated," the mission said.

Thailand, Korea

On Thursday, the DFA received on behalf of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, a check worth $100,000 (P5.2 million) from Thailand, also for the affected Leyteños.

Philippine Ambassador to Seoul Susan Castrence also reported to have received $7,000 (P360,010) in cash donations from multi-sectoral donors in South Korea, as well as a pledge from Korean firm Kumho Tires to send donations in kind for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

Among the latest donors from South Korea was National Tax Service Commissioner Jusung Lee, who gave $2,000 (P102,860) , and the Korea-Philippines Friendship Association which sent $1,000 (P51,430). Pacific Asia Society, a non-government organization based in that country, gave $250 (P12,857).

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'Minor' blasts rock Pasig police offices

By Tarra V. Quismundo

TWO MINOR BLASTS ROCKED A compound housing police offices near a commercial strip in Pasig City yesterday morning, creating suspicions the explosions could be linked to the current political unrest.

No one was injured, and no damage to property was reported.

The blasts occurred just as President Macapagal-Arroyo prepared to announce the lifting of Proclamation 1017 (state of national emergency), and before a scheduled protest march of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on Meralco Avenue.

Hit by the consecutive explosions between 9:45 and 10 a.m. yesterday were detachments of the Regional Special Weapons and Tactics team (RSWAT), the Eastern Police District (EPD) Mobile Force, and the EPD Traffic Enforcement Unit in a compound on Meralco Avenue in Ortigas Center.

"We thought we were under attack because this is where we keep our rifles and ammunition," said RSWAT's Insp. Michael Chavez, one of eight members of the elite force who was in the barracks when the explosions occurred.

Some people in the restaurant strip Metrowalk, across the police compound, scampered away because of the explosions, witnesses said..

"I thought . it was part of the protests. We had been told to be careful of groups that might hold protests here," said Faye Ty, branch supervisor of a coffee shop in Metrowalk.

Police officials dismissed the incidents as isolated and "very minor." They said the explosives used were "of the gang-war type" and lacked sophisticated wiring or mechanisms.

Said Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao who was at the scene shortly after the incident: "It's a very, very minor explosion. We do not consider this a very big cause for alarm."

Lomibao said the motive for the incidents could not yet be established yet. "We do not know if the ones responsible are pranksters, or destabilizers, or just people who would like to create trouble."

The two explosives were planted on both sides of the row of container vans that served as police offices.

The first blast created a small and shallow crater at the concrete base of an electric post on a sidewalk at Meralco Avenue.

The second explosion occurred less than a minute later and some 50 meters away from the scene of the first blast, behind a canteen at the far end of the police detachments' row.

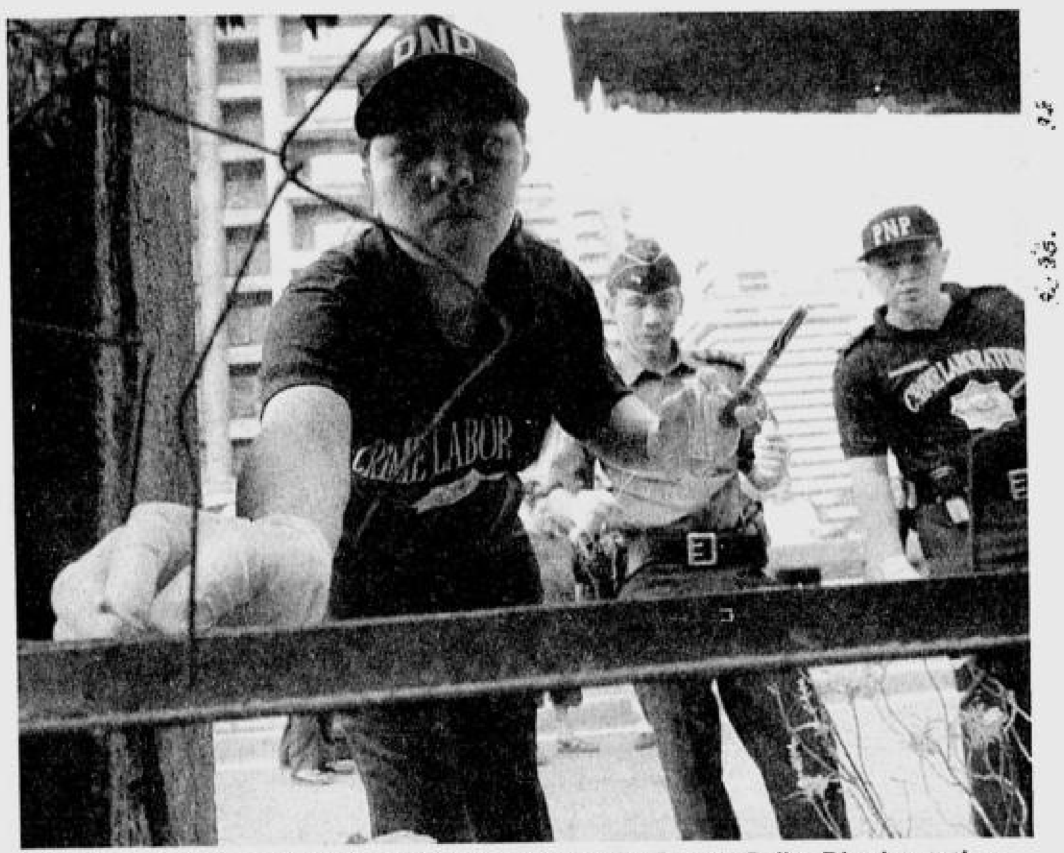
After checking the area for other explosives, the EPD Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD), found no other bombs. Ambulances and a fire truck were also sent to the area.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Vidal Querol said the blasts could have been an offshoot of a fraternity war.

The explosions suggested they were caused by simple pillboxes, he added.

"The motives, the groups responsible are matters to be investigated," Querol told reporters.

The incidents shut down traffic on the northbound lane of Meralco Avenue's stretch between Doña Julia Vargas and Ortigas Avenues, until investigators finished their work in the afternoon.



POLICE gather pieces of evidence of the blast near the Eastern Police District station.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Alleged 'shabu queen' nabbed in Taguig; children used as couriers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A WOMAN SUSPECTED TO BE the "queen" of the illegal drugs trade in Taguig City, who allegedly employed children as young as eight years old in her business, was arrested by the police early yesterday morning.

Alleged "shabu queen" Fe Bergonia, reportedly in hiding for two years, was arrested in her home on J.P. Rizal Street, Barangay Upper Bicutan, said Senior Insp. Eufronio Obong, chief of the city's Drug Enforcement Unit.

The police conducted a buy-bust operation at 3:45 a.m. following complaints from Bergonia's neighbors that she had recruited minors for her operations. An arrest warrant was issued for the suspect in 2004 for violation of Section 5 of the Dangerous Drug Act since 2004. The suspect allegedly used children, aged 8 to 17, as drug couriers, Obong said. He added that children would sell 50 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride, more popularly known as shabu, on a daily basis.

Bergonia's operation was centered n Barangays Upper Bicutan and Ususan, where police raided last month what was described as a "smaller version" of the Pasig City shabu market which was the target of a raid by the Philippine National Police on Feb. 10.

Councilor Henry Dueñas, head of the Taguig Anti-Crime and Illegal Drugs Task Force, said they were still checking Bergonia's story that her shabu supply came from Quiapo Dos, Maharlika Village.

PP 1017 didn't make ripple on citizenry

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON agriculture and blue ribbon went overboard when it linked President Macapagal-Arroyo to the alleged misuse of the P728-million fertilizer fund.

By implicating the President in the alleged fund scam, the two Senate committees probably thought Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante would come out of hiding to save his boss.

Bolante is the principal player in the reported irregularity. He has repeatedly ignored summonses from the Senate.

The two Senate committees say GMA's "failure to disprove the charges… suggest her culpability and involvement in this unforgivable act."

Whoa! How do you expect the President to disprove charges of a scam when she didn't have a hand in the fund's alleged illegal disbursement, if ever?

It's the same as implicating an employer in the theft committed by his/her housemaid on a neighbor when the *amo* was ignorant of the maid's crime.

Oh, yes, GMA's fault was in not choosing her subordinates well. But implicating her in Bolante's alleged crime is going too far.

* * *

EXCEPT for the drama at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 came and went without creating a ripple on their humdrum existence of ordinary citizens.

The standoff in Fort Bonifacio gave the citizens vicarious adventure. But other than that, PP 1017 was just another presidential edict that didn't affect the citizenry.

Life was normal under the PP1017 that was lifted yesterday.

* * *

I DON'T know what evidence the government has on retired Maj. Gen. Ramon Montaño, former chief of the defunct Philippine Constabulary (PC), but arresting him without a warrant was a big mistake.

How could Montaño have taken part in the alleged coup plot when, by his own admission, he's too old for such an adventure?

During his stint in the military, he became the nemesis of then renegade Col. Gregorio Honasan, who has been implicated in the latest alleged coup plot.

Montaño's fault was in calling for the resignation of the President. In that case, former President Cory Aquino should also be taken in custody for issuing a strong call for GMA to resign.

* * *

FOR the first two months of this year, collections by the Bureau of Customs surpassed those in the same months last year despite the unstable economic climate.

The reason for this is that the new chief, Napoleon Morales, and his deputy, Celso Templo, are old hands at the customs bureau.

Morales and Templo know the ins and outs in the bureau. They know when to make apprehensions and when to be lenient with imported cargo.

The result is that there are more importations. And importations result in more tariffs.

* * *

SMUGGLING can never be eliminated at the piers and the customs zones. But it can be minimized.

The Morales-Templo tandem has been able to reduce smuggling to the barest minimum.

Why? Because the two have orders from Malacañang to arrest people who drop the name of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo who want to engage in smuggling.

* * *

RADIO and television tend to exaggerate news on bombing incidents.

The reported explosion at the Metrowalk mall on Ortigas yesterday did not take place at the mall itself but near the police detachment outside the mall.

Witnesses said black smoke billowed from the blast. The detachment is manned by SWAT cops. From the looks of it, the explosion was caused by a smoke grenade used against unruly demonstrators or hostage-takers.

Now, guess who is allowed to carry smoke grenades?

BI officials, guards face charges for jailbreak

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) OFFICIAL, a former warden and five jail guards assigned at the BI Detention Center in Bicutan, Taguig City, now face criminal and administrative charges in connection with the escape of three foreign detainees last December.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Special Task Force headed by Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda will also conduct an investigation to determine the possible culpability of other BI officials and employees in the escape of Sri Lankan national Jayamaha Mudalege Don Keerthi Jamayaha or "Keerthi," and Chinese suspects Tan Tin Shao and Go Sak Ping.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) fact finding committee headed by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco recommended that jail guards Carlos Garcia, Antonio Tantay, Ray Abrau, Lacman Sulay and Arsenio Samson be immediately placed under preventive suspension after formal administrative charges were filed against them.

The committee likewise recommended that Garcia, Tantay and Abrau be charged criminally for infidelity in the custody of prisoners, obstruction of apprehension and prosecution of criminal offenders, and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Jail guards Sulay and Samson, who were absent but indicated in the BI logbook that they were "on duty" during the incident, face criminal charges for falsification by a public officer and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. The five guards also face administrative charges for dishonest and grave misconduct, according to the report.

Apart from facing similar administrative charges, the committee also recommended that BI intelligence division chief Faisal Hussin and former BI warden Popoy de Leon be charged for attempted bribery in exchange for the release of another detainee in 2001.

Caloocan defers payment of property tax

By Nancy C. Carvajal

CALOOCAN CITY PROPERTY OWNERS have something to be happy about these days.

The implementation of the .5 percent tax rate increase of commercial and industrial land in the city has been temporarily suspended for two years starting this year, according to an ordinance approved by the city council.

The ordinance, which was unanimously approved by members of the council on Jan.10, covers real property taxes for 2006 and 2007.

At present, the city government collects one percent in real property taxes from the owners.

Based on Republic Act 7160, the city government was authorized to impose a basic real property tax rate not exceeding two percent of the assessed value of the real property.

According to the ordinance, real property owners would only start paying 1.5 percent in real property taxes starting 2008.

The decision to defer the increase was made following persistent public clamor and petitions from different sectors, according to City Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

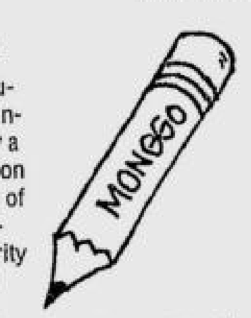
He said the move would lessen the effect of increases in the prices of goods, labor, cost of living, crude oil, and other basic needs.

"It would also cushion the impact in the implementation of the expanded value added tax," the mayor added.

He said that it is also the local government's way of expressing its gratitude to those who pay the right taxes on time.

METROBRIEFS

Mongol fakes



THE POLICE seized thousands of counterfeit Mongol pencils worth nearly a million pesos in Manila on Thursday. This was one of the police's first accomplishments as the security situation in the country began "normalizing," a day before President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the declaration of a nationwide emergency. Carrying search warrants, agents from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group raided a warehouse on Juan Luna Street, reportedly owned by Nancy Go, in Binondo, Manila, and seized nearly 200,000 pieces of Mongol pencils. The pencils are exclusively manufactured in Venezuela City, and only in the Philippines. The seized pencils were reportedly manufactured in China and smuggled into the country, according to the CIDG-Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division. *Luige A. del Puerto*

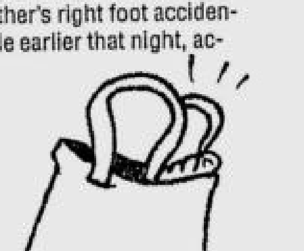
Pink urinals have to go

ACTING on complaints of foul odor from Pasay City residents, Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad requested the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to dismantle the pink urinals installed by the agency in the city. "The urinals are already defective as they are poorly maintained. The urine already spills into the streets," said Sanitation Insp. 5 Rosendo Cabanayan yesterday. There are around 17 urinals along the Nala Road and Roxas Boulevard within the city limits. Cabanayan said the local government would ask owners of commercial establishments in the city to provide rest rooms in the city streets. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Pawnshop robbery foiled

ALERT policemen foiled an attempt to rob the Commonwealth Pawnshop and Money Exchange along the Marcos Highway, San Roque, Marikina City, on Thursday evening. City police chief Supt. Manuel Gaerlan said the suspects left behind an acetylene tank, a bolt cutter, hammer and other drilling tools. Gaerlan said they could have been involved in the series of pawnshop robberies in Metro Manila. The owner of the pawnshop, Ret. Col. Ely Ramos, told police he was about to enter the shop when he heard the sound of a drill from an adjacent unit. Responding policemen came to his call for help, but the suspects were able to escape shortly before the law enforcers arrived. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Case of the missing foot



A RIGHT foot inside a nylon bag was discovered late Thursday night on the center island across the Casino Filipino in Parañaque City. But what authorities thought was the body part of a dismembered "chop chop victim" turned out to be the amputated right foot of a diabetic woman. The woman's son, Ruben Alonzo, went to the office of Barangay Santo Niño in Parañaque to report that the bag that held his mother's right foot accidentally fell from their vehicle earlier that night, according to a report from the 1st Police Center for Aviation Security (PCAS) of the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group (PNP-ASG). Two men working at the PAIR PAGS cargo across the Casino Filipino discovered the nylon bag at around 10 p.m. When the police opened the bag, they found one right foot packed in a black garbage bag inside a box. A check by the police led them to the barangay center where they learned that Alonzo had filed a report about his mother's missing foot. Supt. Rizalino Roxas, operations chief of the ASG-Airport Security Center, said that according to Alonzo, his mother's doctor allowed them to bring home the foot in case they wanted to bury it. *Nikko Dizon*

Beta Sigma jubilee

THE BETA Sigma fraternity, one of the largest Philippines-based fraternities with alumni chapters worldwide, has begun preparing for its 60th anniversary celebration this year with a series of activities with its theme "Beta Sigma Reaches out to the World." Vic Ramos, president of the UP Beta Sigma Fraternity Alumni Association and former environment secretary, said that the jubilee celebration will be highlighted by week-long festivities to be led by the UP mother chapter starting July 7. The celebrations will then be capped by the Diamond Jubilee Ball on July 14. Rico Arranz, one of the surviving founding members, was appointed chair of the Advisory Board of the Jubilee celebrations, with Frankie LLaguno, JJ Jayme, and Jimmy Yambao. Teddy Rey was also named Jubilee Commission chair. Among the activities lined up are art exhibits, a golf tournament, and on-the-spot figure painting. For details, call the UP Beta Sigma Fraternity Alumni Association secretariat at 7440453, Telefax 7235334 or visit the website www.upbetasigma.info.

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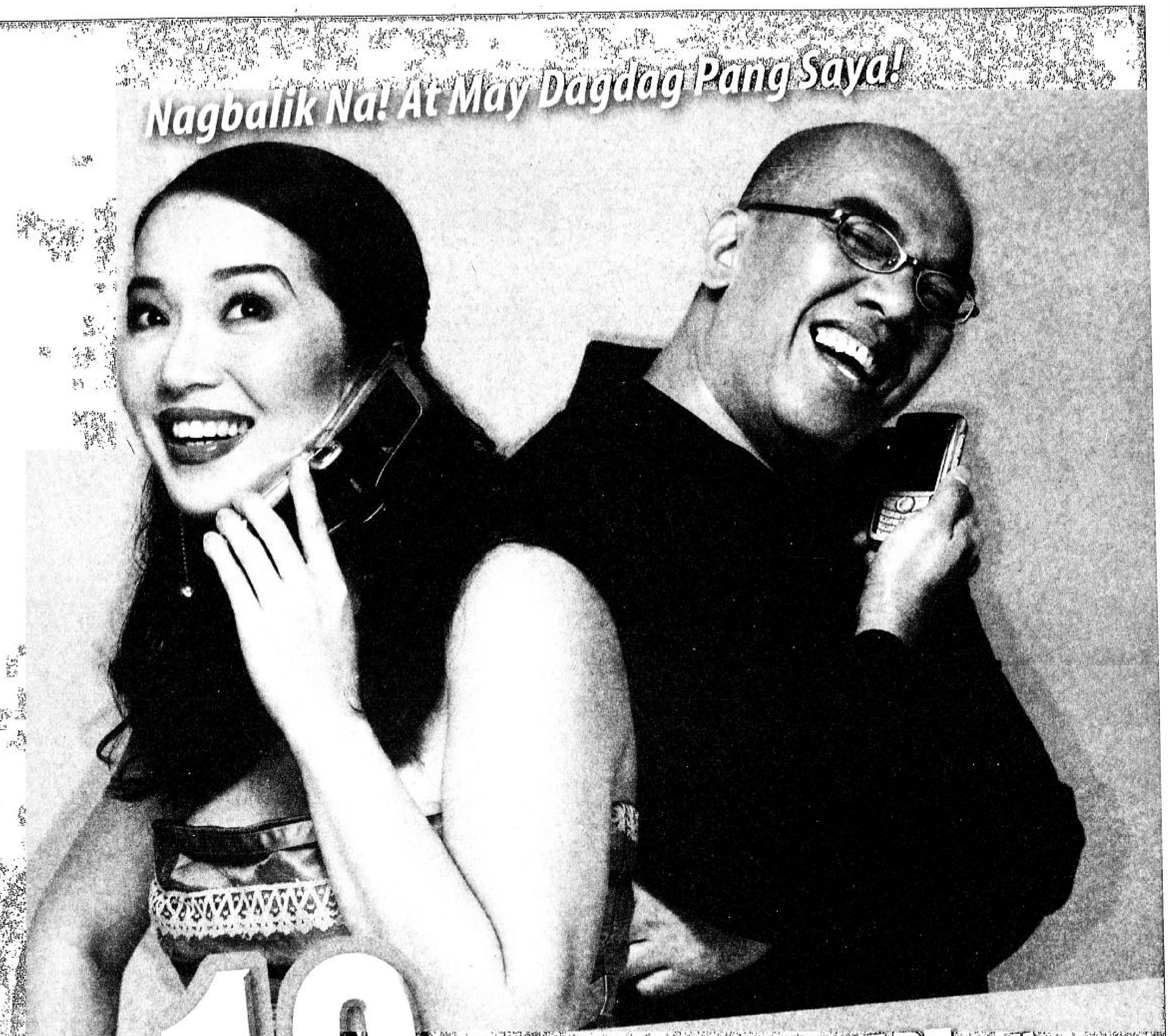

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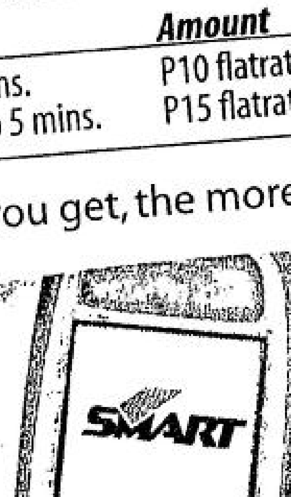
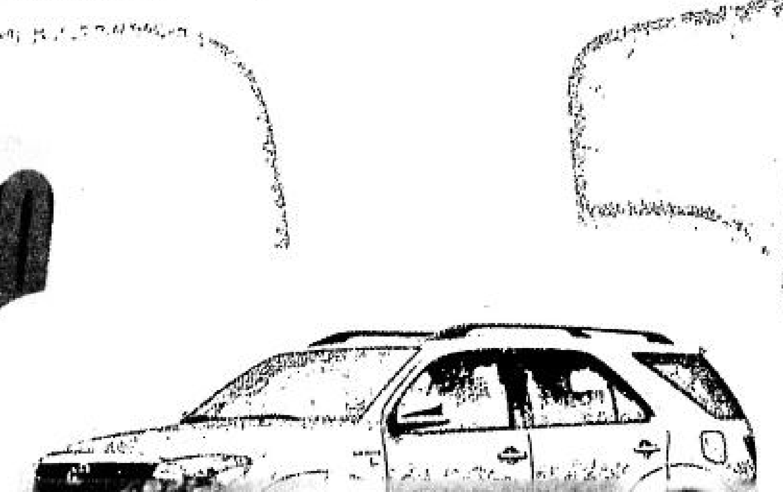


- P1,000 worth of Airtime *Daily* (250 winners)



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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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Gabi guns for world titles today

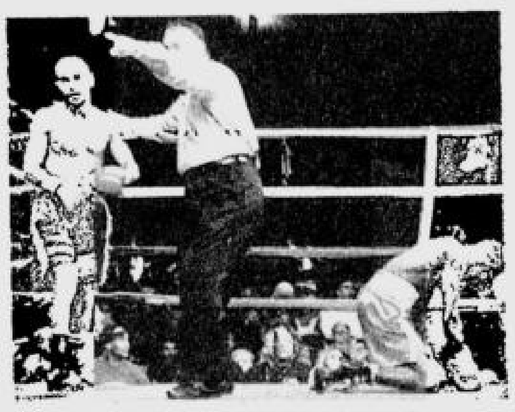
RP flyweight fights champp Darchinyan in California

DIOSDADO GABI ATTEMPTS to become the only Filipino with two world crowns today when he challenges IBF and IBO flyweight king Vic Darchinyan at the Chumash Resort Casino in Sta. Ynez, California.

The 12-round rumble will be aired live by Solar Sports starting at 12:30 p.m. with a replay at 9:30 tonight.

At yesterday's weigh-in, held at the Chumash Resort Casino, Gabi came in at a trim 111 lbs, while Darchinyan, the Armenia-born champ from Sydney, Australia, tipped the scales at exactly 112 lbs.

An all-American cast of officials have been appointed by the International Boxing Federation for the 12-round battle, with David Mendoza the third man on the ring.



HEAVY FAVORITE: Armenia-born Vic Darchinyan (left) being directed to a neutral corner, during his last win by knockout.

Darchinyan has vowed to knock out Gabi, but if he fails, Lou Moret, David Denkin and Pat Russell will render judgment.

The bout has been billed as a battle between talented southpaws. Darchinyan has scored six consecutive bouts by knockout.

Gabi, who has never been knocked out, has won his last 12 bouts, including eight by KO.

The Filipino will come into the fight wearing a robe with the Philippine tri-colors. His trunks will be in a blue-red-gold combo.

Boxing icon Manny Pacquiao had extended his good luck message to his gym mate Gabi, who will be assisted in his corner by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach, cutman Joe Chavez, assistant trainer Eric Brown and manager Michael Koncz.

"This fight is for my country, my city (Davao), and my family," Gabi said in Filipino. "I will leave everything on the ring."

He will pray at a local church in California today before proceeding to the fight venue.

It will be a tough assignment for Gabi, though, as he faces an undefeated champion considered as the world's hardest-punching flyweight today.

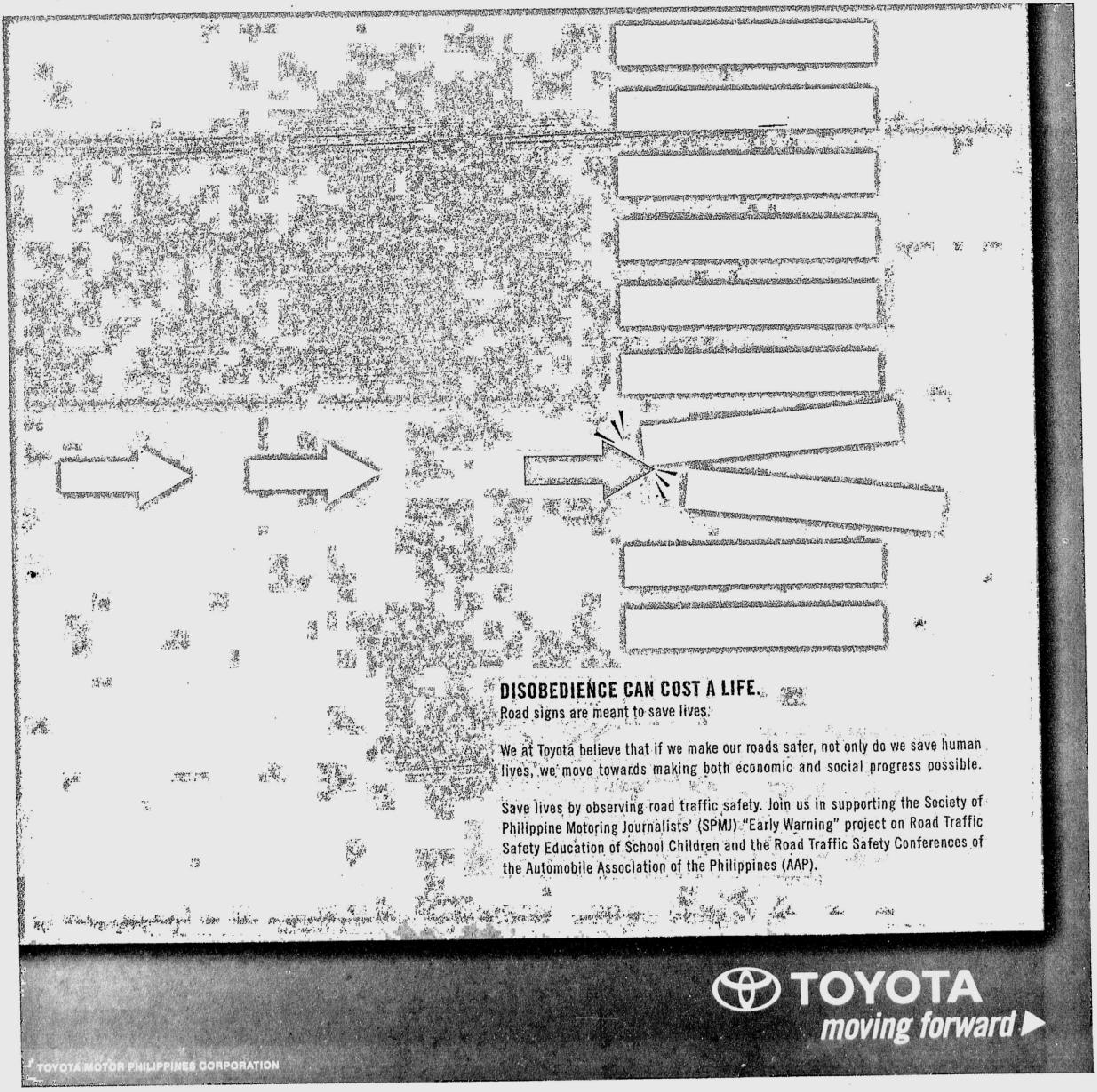
The cocky Darchinyan (24-0, 19 KOs) had predicted a knockout win over Gabi, even asking the latter to choose the round when he would be kayoed.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

DIOSDADO Gabi (left) faces a certified knockout artist in his most important fight to date. Manny Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, will be in his corner.

TALE OF THE TAPE

VIC DARCHINYAN		DIOSDADO GABI
Australia	Country	Philippines
24-0-0 (19 KO's	Record	26-2-1 (18 KO's
79%	KO Percentage	69%
30	Age	26
165.5 cm	Reach	163 cm
5'5 1/2	Height	5'2
112	Weight	111
Southpaw	Stance	Southpaw
1	Win in First Rd	8



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Rodriguez selected first overall in PBL draft

CODIÑERA PDI PHOTO

By Jasmine W. Payo

WITH TEAMS PASSING UP THE FIRST ROUND of selection because of their intact lineups, there were only a handful of talents who got passes to the Philippine Basketball League yesterday.

Larry Rodriguez was the first name in that short list.

Montaña Pawnshop made the Philippine Maritime Institute standout the number one pick, believing in his potential to be a top player in the future.

The 6-foot-4 forward from Tondo, who led the 56 aspirants seeking slots in PBL rosters, will join the Jewels' roster of versatile big men when the 2006 Unity Cup kicks off on March 25.

"He's a good player, he can play at the post and has a good touch from the perimeter," said assistant coach Nel Parado. "He has the makings of a top player because of his speed and agility."

Toyota Otis, the cellar dweller last conference, acquired the first pick but passed up the chance to beef up its squad. Heroes Cup champion Magnolia Ice Cream, runner-up Rain or Shine and Harbour Centre also begged off in the first round.

As a result, only 12 players were picked in yesterday's exercise.

Hapee-PCU selected Beljun Lapera, a 5-foot-9 guard from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, making him the second overall pick.

Granny Goose chose Eder Saldua third overall, while league newcomer TeleTech wrapped up the first round by selecting Eleonardo Labitag of World Citi Colleges.

Montaña acquired 6-foot-3 Jesse James Collado of the University of Cincinnati in the second round. Raffy Fabie went to Hapee-PCU, Ryan Espeño to Granny Goose, Felmer Jaboli to Rain or Shine and Henzel Tabladillo to TeleTech.

The draft ended in the third round with Josias Catacutan going to Granny Goose, Aries Sta. Maria to Rain or Shine and Donn Yu to TeleTech.

Teams also absorbed several players from the dispersal draft after Far Eastern Insurance decided to pull out in the coming conference.

TeleTech, which will be mentored by debuting coach Jerry Codiñera, hopes Don Villamin, Jay Sierra and Mel Latorena can provide the experience in its maiden campaign.

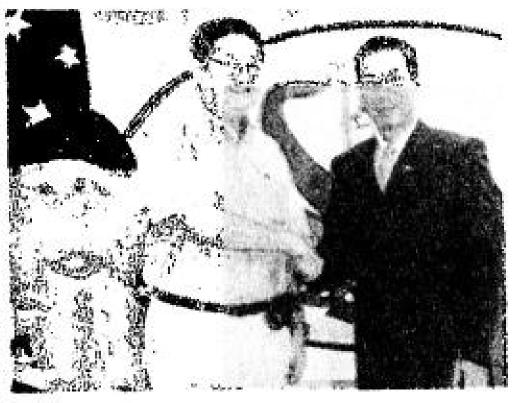
Veteran Christian Coronel will again suit up for Totyota Otis, while 6-foot-8 center Lawrence Bonus will join Montaña.

Bulls to keep fire burning

By June Navarro

THE PROBLEM WITH BEING A CHAMPION team is losing the hunger to win in the next tournament. Red Bull hopes to be different.

Learning from the misfortune that befell San Miguel Beer last conference, Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao said his team will keep the hunger alive in the PBA All-Filipino Cup set to open tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.



MARIO Mamon, president and CEO of Enchanted Kingdom (left), and PBA commissioner Noli Eala recently signed an agreement in which both parties agree to do promotional activities to promote the league and vise versa starting with the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup.

"We want to keep the hunger in us alive," said Guiao, whose team is coming off a championship conquest of Purefoods in the 2006 Fiesta Conference. "The desire to win should always be there."

The Beermen finished eighth last conference right after capturing the 2005 Fiesta Conference. The Bulls succeeded them as champions, finishing off Purefoods in six games of a race-to-four affair.

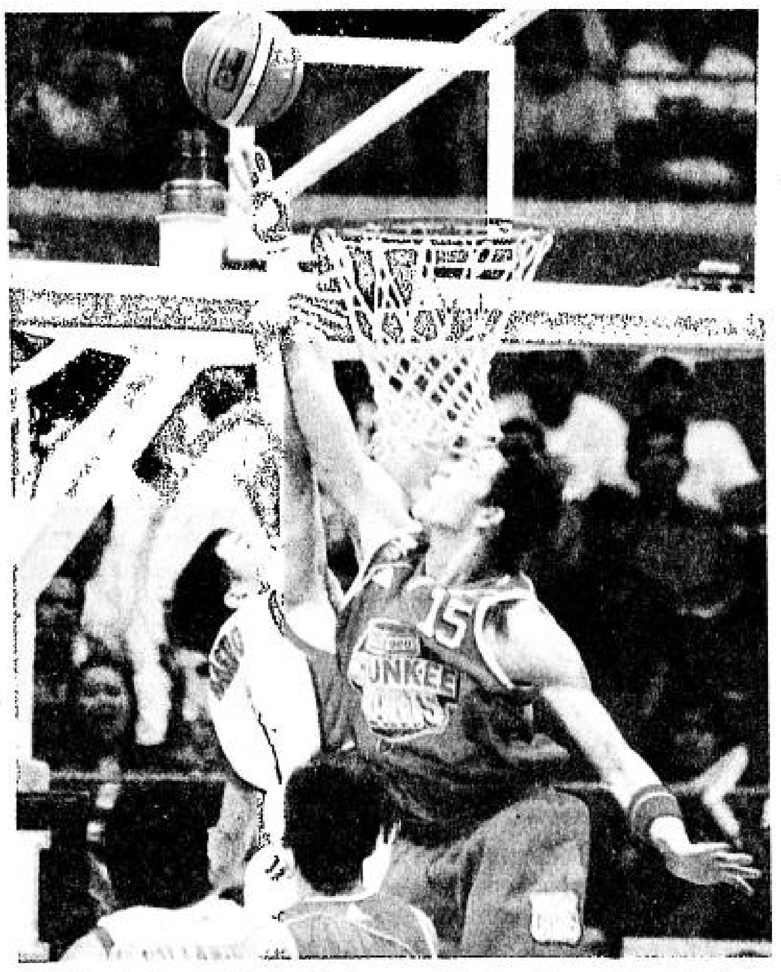
Red Bull, though, looks headed for an uphill climb in its bid for a back-to-back, a feat last achieve by current Philippine Cup defending champion Ginebra.

"The race is so wide open," said Guiao. "Just like in the Fiesta Conference, the top four remains to be Talk 'N Text, Ginebra, San Miguel and Alaska," said Guiao.

"Of course, there's Air21," he added. "Who knows what kind of miracle it will do this time. Purefoods and our team are just in the middle of the pack," he added.

In an effort to beef up their frontline, the Bulls added the energetic Rich Alvarez in the power forward rotation. Alvarez is reunited with former Ateneo teammates Rico Villanueva, Larry Fonacier and Paolo Bugia.

That trade with the Alaska Aces for two first-round picks in 2006 and 2007 has attracted more attention than usual.



AFTER winning the Fiesta Conference via a bruising series against Purefoods, Red Bull eyes a second straight crown. PDI PHOTO

PBA launches new fan promo

A GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS SET TODAY AT GERRY'S GRILL FOR ALL THOSE who wish to join the PBA's latest promo, FAN-T-ASTIG, which aims to organize all fan clubs under one umbrella group. The project will not only give fan clubs an air of exclusivity but also give its members a chance to have a little income through networking. Meanwhile, conference and loyalty tickets and privilege membership cards for the season-ending meet are now available at the PBA booking office. For details, call Nestor Noblejas or Gerry Mesias at 636-5320 to 21.

Reyes wants Asiad stint for RP team

THE ASIAN GAMES MAY NOT BE PART OF the agreement that serves as a basis for the formation of the national pool currently training under coach Chot Reyes.

But just the same, the squad is currently preparing for the quadrennial meet to be held in Doha, Qatar, this year.

His main reason? The country has a shot at winning the title with China's Yao Ming expected to skip the event because of his NBA commitment.

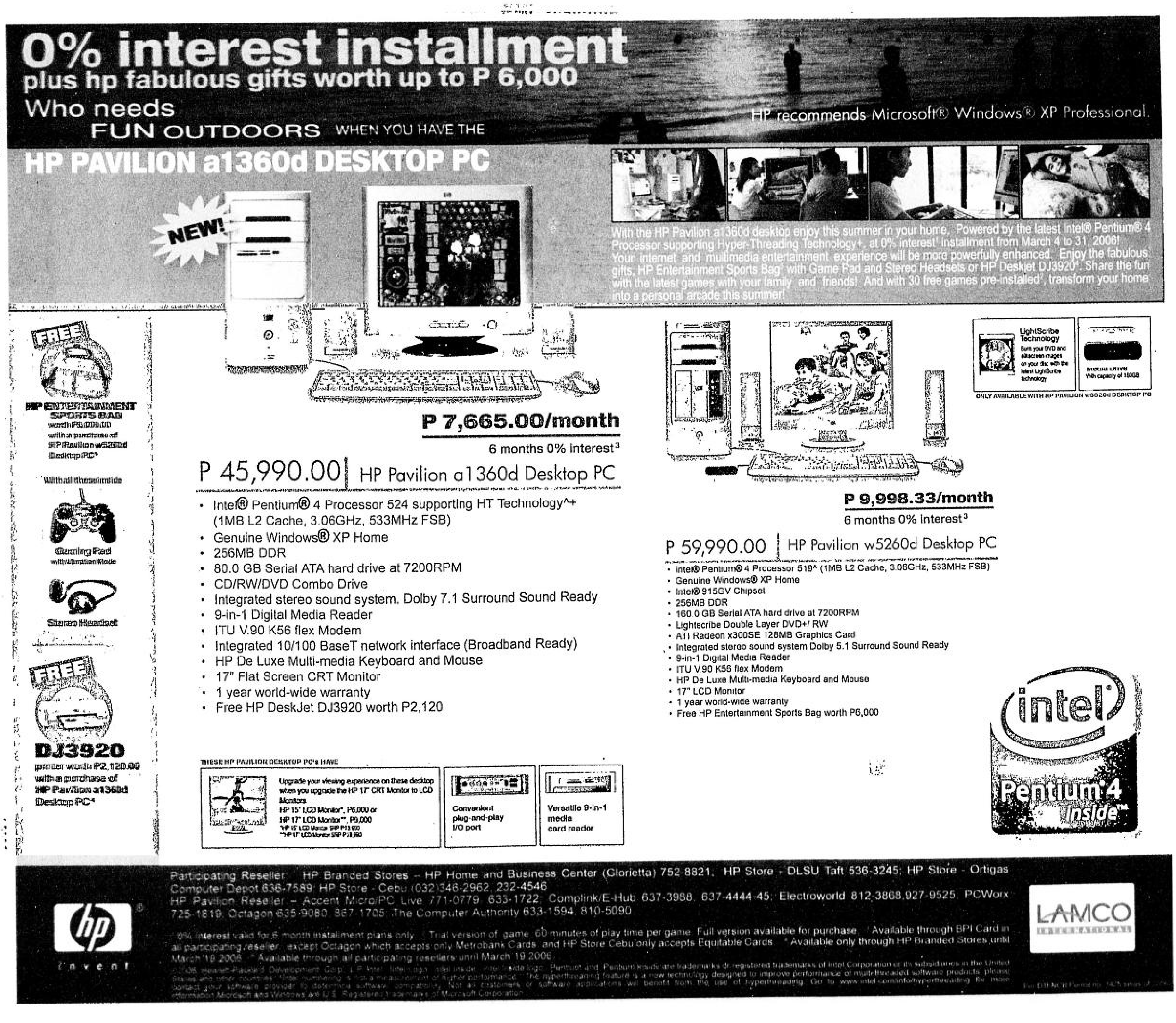
"I read in the papers that Yao Ming is definitely seeing action in this year's world championship in Japan and if this is so, it is likely that he will not be allowed by the Houston Rockets (Yao's team in the NBA) to also play in the Asian Games," Reyes said at the Scoop sa Kamayan yesterday.

"I don't think there is any team stronger than China in Asia with Yao Ming there. But without him, any team including the Philippines has a chance to win in the Asian Games," he reasoned out, adding that the absence of the 7-foot-5 Chinese behemoth will make Korea, Qatar and Libya as the teams to beat in any Asian tournament.

"And we have, to a certain extent, beaten these teams before so there is the possibility that we can beat them again,"

Reyes also hopes to put on a show for the Filipinos working in Qatar.

"I want to give our *kababayans* in Qatar what they missed in last Fiba-Asia championship where we were supposed to play," he said, recalling how many Filipinos there have been eagerly awaiting a stint by their favorite players.



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RP coach gives Amit even chance vs rated foe

AMIT: Dangerous foe

FILIPINO RUBILEN Amit stands on equal footing with world-ranked Charlotte Sorensen of Denmark.

National women's coach Edgard Asonto gave this assessment yesterday before Amit, the 2005 Southeast Asian Games double-gold medalist, faced Sorensen, rated No. 41 among women, in the quarterfinal round of the 2006 WPA Amway Women's World 9-Ball Championship at the Taipei Stadium in Taiwan.

"I believe that Rubilen has an even chance against her Danish foe," Asonto said. "She did it in the SEA Games last December, with fighting heart she can do it again."

The amiable Amit advanced to the race-to-7, winner's-break quarterfinals slated at 7 p.m. today toting a 3-2 win-loss record in Group D, which was topped by Jasmine Ouchin of Austria with a perfect 5-0 record.

Amit, playing under the auspices of sportsman Aristeo "Putch" Puyat and Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo, was a wild card entry in the $70,000-tournament as sponsor's choice.

Another Filipino, Johanna "The Captain" Dee, failed to advance after losing three elimination-round games to Malaysian Esther SY Kwan, 7-4, Taiwanese Lin Shu-ling, 7-0, and Japanese Nouchi Masami, 7-2, respectively.

Ouchin and reigning titlist Kim Ga-young of South Korea (5-0), lead the top eight players who advanced outright. Also seeded were Chang Shuhan of Chinese-Taipei, No. 4 Chihiro Kawahara of Japan, 5 Akimi Kajitani of Japan, No. 6 Hyun Won of Korea, No. 7 Line Kjorsvik of Norway and No. 8 Jeannie Seaver of the US.

Amit and the other 15 finalists go through the single-elimination yesterday.

In the 2004 Austria edition of the Women's World 9-ball, lone Filipino Iris Rañola landed 44th among 48 entries.

Meanwhile, Asonto accompanied Rañola to the Games and Amusements Board yesterday to get a professional license. Amit and Rañola are competing in the Japan Open on March 15. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Nash's MVP chances bright; All-Star Game losing luster

COMMENTARY

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—SPENT TWO hours and change on a cold and rainy night Wednesday watching the National Basketball Association on cable television.

Steve Nash scored 23 points in 34 minutes as the Phoenix Suns destroyed the Milwaukee Bucks, 123-110, at home.

After the game, TNT analyst Doug Collins, pronounced Nash his choice for the Most Valuable Player race this year.

"Steve has my vote so far," said Collins, a former NBA player and coach. He said no conversation about the MVP award this season can begin without mentioning the incumbent.

The 6-foot-3 Nash, a Canadian of South African descent, won hands down last year.

Despite losing two starters and center Amare Stoudemire to injury for the first 52 games, the Suns, led by Nash, have not only remained a major force in the Western Conference. They now sit on top of their division at 38 wins and 17 losses.

Often mentioned to give Nash a run for the MVP trophy are Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers, LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers, Chauncey Billups of the Detroit Pistons and Dirk Nowitzki of the Dallas Mavericks.

* * *

The NBA All-Star Game is a certifiable hit in basketball-crazed countries like ours. But it is losing luster at home.

Going against the Winter Olympics coverage on NBC, the All-Star Game shown on cable station TNT was watched by 4.3 percent of US households with televisions. According to the Nielsen ratings, that's down 12 percent from last year's ratings.

The game used to be the prized possession of the networks, first NBC and then ABC. But with its declining appeal, the game's been relegated to cable TV.

To shore up the game's sagging image, NBA commissioner Dave Stern has come up with a solution. He has engineered a move to hold the All-Star Game in Las Vegas next year.

Stern calls the 2007 game "a merger between the basketball capital of the world and the entertainment capital of the world."

Las Vegas is America's largest metro market without a professional sports team.

Gavin Maloof, who with his brothers own the Sacramento Kings and The Palms, a Las Vegas hotel and casino, welcomed the All-Star Game with open arms.

"It would be the biggest event since Elvis," Maloof told the USA Today newspaper.

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the games

luzon eliminations
march 21-23
la salle greenhills

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the search

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Tiger feasts on Blue Monster, grabs 1-shot lead

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS BIRDIED FIVE HOLES in a six-hole stretch along the back nine of the Blue Monster Thursday, shooting an 8-under 64 to take a one-shot lead over Phil Mickelson and four others after the first round of the Ford Championship at Doral.

In a balmy start to the Florida swing of the US PGA Tour's schedule, Woods reached the 603-yard 12th hole in two for his second of five birdies and picked up strokes on Nos. 14, 15 and 16 to sit one shot ahead of Colombia's Camila Villegas, Rich Beem, Ryan Palmer, Mark Wilson and Mickelson.

"This guy Tiger seems to play well every day, every week," Mickelson said. "I'm just trying to keep pace. I'm trying to maybe have another shot at dueling out with him on Sunday, and I'm glad that he's playing well. I've got to do my part and stay with him."

The first round rekindled memories of last year, when Woods won a showdown with Mickelson, pulling ahead on a 30-foot birdie putt at No. 17 while Mickelson lipped out a birdie chip on the last hole.

On Thursday, 60 players broke 70 and 116 players were at par or better.

"The times I looked at the board, neither one of us were up there," Woods said.

Woods got off to a hot start on a tropical afternoon Thursday with birdies on three of his first four holes, including a tee shot to within a foot on the 222-yard fourth hole. Mickelson, who started on the back nine, made three straight birdies around the turn, and while his gallery was about one-fourth the size of those watching Woods, they were as passionate as ever.

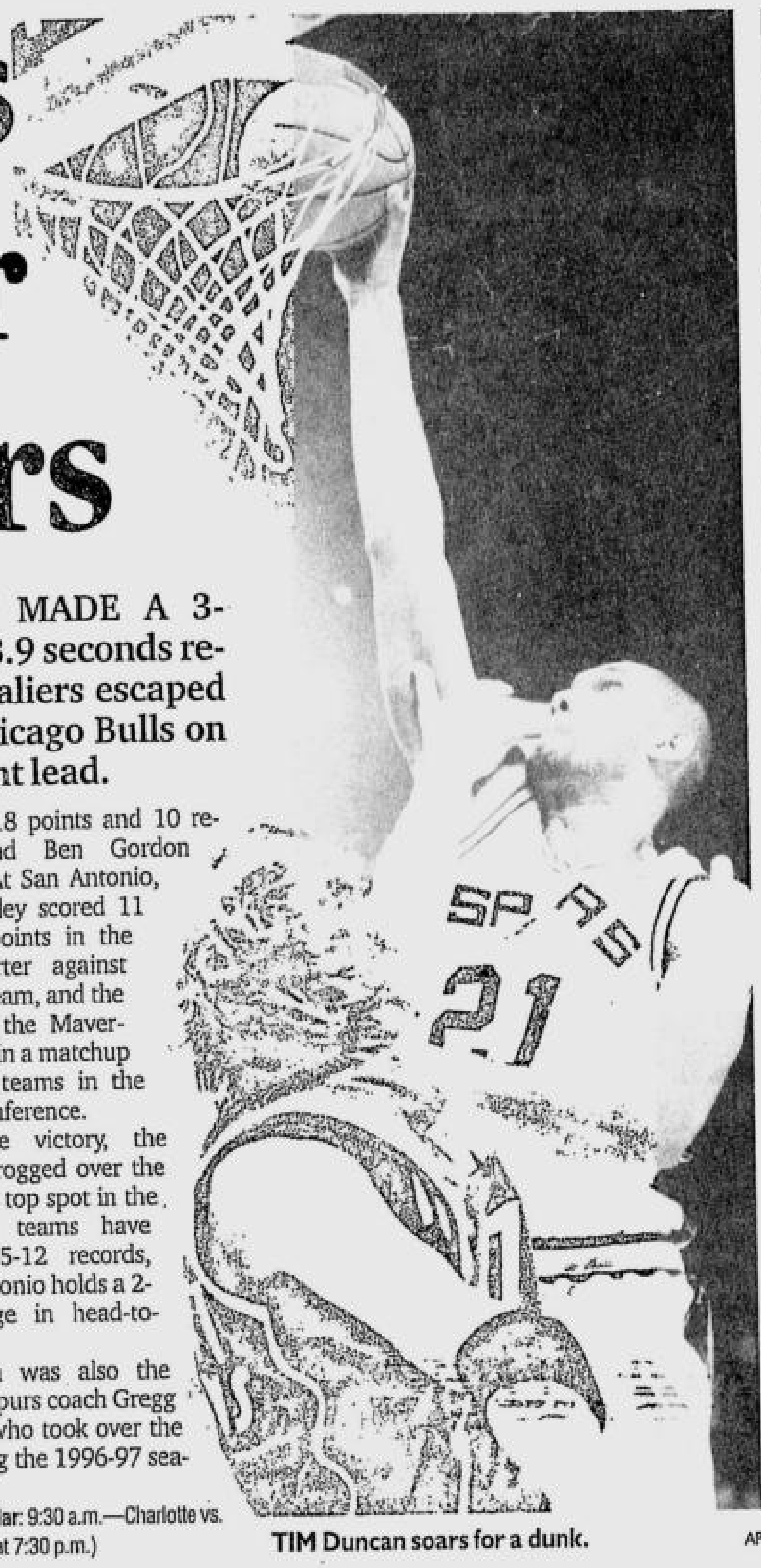
There were throaty cheers when Mickelson made a 12-foot birdie on No. 5, and one man yelled, "Yeah! He's letting Tiger know that he's coming!"

At that point, Woods was only about 250 yards away as he walked down the 14th fairway. He hit wedge into 10 feet, the start of three straight birdies that gave him the lead. His 64 was his best score in the first round on the US PGA Tour since a 63 in the 2003 Western Open, which he went on to win by five.

Villegas, one of several promising rookies, overcame a bogey-4 at No. 4 with an eagle on the 528-yard, par-5 eighth and birdied four straight holes until settling for a two-putt par from about 8 feet on the 18th. That put him at 65. *AP*

WOODS AP

Slump's over for Cavaliers


TIM Duncan soars for a dunk. AP

CHICAGO—RONALD MURRAY MADE A 3-pointer from the right side with 3.9 seconds remaining, and the Cleveland Cavaliers escaped with a 92-91 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Thursday after blowing a 25-point lead.

Murray, acquired from Seattle at the trade deadline, scored 11 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers snapped a five-game losing streak.

LeBron James, who averaged 34.5 points in the first two games against the Bulls, scored 33—none in the final 7:40. He had 19 at halftime, matching his total the previous night in a loss to Sacramento.

With forward Drew Gooden out with flu-like symptoms, second-year pro Anderson Varejao got the first start of his career and responded with 13 points and six rebounds. But he missed two free throws with 18 seconds left and the Cavaliers down, 88-87.

Eric Snow added 14 points and eight assists.

Kirk Hinrich had 25 points and nine rebounds, two nights after he had 30 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists in a 111-100 victory over Minnesota. Luol Deng finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Ben Gordon scored 16. At San Antonio, Michael Finley scored 11 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter against his former team, and the Spurs beat the Mavericks, 98-89, in a matchup of the top teams in the Western Conference.

With the victory, the Spurs leapfrogged over the Mavs to the top spot in the West. The teams have identical 45-12 records, but San Antonio holds a 2-1 advantage in head-to-head play.

The win was also the 500th for Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, who took over the team during the 1996-97 season. AP

NBA on Solar: 9:30 a.m.—Charlotte vs. Dallas (replay at 7:30 p.m.)

Fed Golf's latest swing is called Tee-Off

READY TO TEE OFF: From left, lawyer Tim Abejo II, Fed Golf director Michael Osmeña, Fed Golf chair and Sports commissioner Richie Garcia, HIP president Dave Valdes, Fed Golf president Rogelio Manalo, and HIP SVP and general manager Poch Bermudez.

THE FEDERATION of Golf Clubs, the largest organization of private golf clubs in the country, and Swing Magazine, the official Philippine golf magazine published by Hinge Inquirer Publications, team up to produce a bimonthly newsletter called Tee-Off.

Each member of the 32 Federation golf clubs will receive a copy of Tee-Off, which hopes to bring the golfing community closer together by sharing news and information between the clubs.

Holding the biggest nationwide tournament of the summer is the best way to celebrate the partnership, so the Federation and Swing put together the National Team Shootout 2006. The Shootout brings team-play to the world of golf by adopting the four-man scramble format in three stages—club, regional satellite, and national levels. A fabulous all expense paid golf holiday to the Spring City Gold resort in Kunming, China, awaits the winning foursome.

Details will be available at all Federation Golf Clubs, selected proshops and from Swing Magazine or www.swing.ph.

NBC inaugural features Tagaytay vs Pangasinan

EXPANSION TEAMS BATANG TAGAYTAY and Pangasinan Hundred Islands will square off when the third season of the National Basketball Conference unwraps on March 10 at the Tagaytay Sports Center.

The Tagaytay squad of Mayor and NBC executive vice president Bambol Tolentino will be led by veterans McDonald Santos, Rodel Mallari, Paolo Malonzo, Arden Guiyab, Joel Finuliar and Rey Ober and rookie Tito Reyes. It will be mentored by former Micaa and PBA cager Ramir Bayot.

Completing Tagaytay's roster are Ian Pellejera, Gian Carlo Yabut, Eric Larica, Ian Bayot, Don Mordeno, Nelson Genido and Maurice Lascana.

Pangasinan counts on NBC veterans and ex-pros. Among them are former Baguio Lions star Melvin Fontanilla, Jun Balares, Efren Valdez, Ryan Ico, 6-foot-9 beanpole Jason Tiongco, UM Hawks standout Ryan Regalado, Mike Dizon, Rey Paul Javier, Jovy Sese, Randy Lopez, Chris Corbin, Melvin Mamaclay, Steve Marucot, James Zablan and Michael Gonzales.

Veteran NBC mentor Jun da Jose will handle the team, assisted by Joseph Pelaez, Allan Meimban and Angel Gumarang.

"We're preparing a grand opening for the league," said Mayor Tolentino, patron of other sports activities like cycling, boxing and chess.

NBC is supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Molten, Nature's Spring and official cable carrier Prime Channel.

NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla sees a more vibrant, exciting tournament this year.

Federer advances in Dubai tennis

DUBAI, UNITED Arab Emirates—Top-seeded Roger Federer had no trouble moving into the semifinals of the Dubai Open with a 6-3, 6-2 win against Robin Vik on Thursday.

A showdown between the top two players in the world became a possibility when second-seeded Rafael Nadal also advanced after ending wildcard Tim Henman's run with a 7-6 (1), 6-1 victory.

Switzerland's Federer will meet Mikhail Youzhny in the semifinals after the Russian cruised to an easy 6-3, 6-1 win over Olivier Rochus of Belgium.

Nadal will be up against Rainer Schuettler of Germany, a 6-4, 6-1 winner over compatriot Bjorn Phau, who had knocked out Andre Agassi in the second round.

Federer, champion here for the past three years, was dominating against Vik, winning five break points out of six.

Nadal was playing only his second event since winning the ATP Masters Series in Madrid last October because of an injury. *AP*

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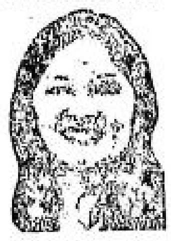


Beth Celis

ALTHOUGH THE Philippines has yet to win its first Olympic gold, not too many people probably know that the country has produced a Filipino Olympic gold medallist in Victoria Manalo Draves.

This piece of invaluable data was relayed to me only the other day by San Francisco-based Dr. Christian Bocobo, my co-author of the book "Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball."

Christian said he came across this info through the Internet. He doesn't remember the year, but Vicki, as he and her contemporaries call her, won in the diving event, according to him.

The gold was never credited to the Philippines because Vicki was an American citizen and carried the colors of the United States.

* * *

Immediately, I called trivia man Bong Barrameda who I know is only one of the very few who could fill in the blanks and provide me with more info on Draves.

To start with, I wanted to know if Draves was her married name, because Christian had referred to her as Vicki Manalo.

"Vicki married her diving coach whose surname is Draves," said Bong who couldn't remember the coach's first name. "And she won two golds, not just one," Bong corrected.

"Vicki swept the two diving events, platform and springboard, in the 1948 London Olympics. She was the first female diver to sweep the two events, if I remember correctly," said the country's greatest researcher, the same guy who produces for television events of such magnitude as the Asian Games and the Olympics.

* * *

I forgot to ask if he witnessed this event personally, but according to Bong, Vicki visited the Philippines after the Olympics where she participated in a diving exhibition at the Rizal Memorial swimming pool.

"*Nagkaroon pa nga ng* motorcade when she arrived," Bong related. "She was feted by no less than Elpidio Quirino who was the president then."

Gosh, that was a long, long time ago because the rate of exchange during Quirino's time was only two pesos to a US dollar.

Bong isn't sure, but he said Draves could be guilty of robbing the country's two Olympic golds.

Although she was raised in the US, Vicki, whose father is Filipino (from Orani, Bataan) and whose mother is British, could have become an American citizen only after she married her coach, according to Bong, who describes the lass as a Tita Duran look-alike.

* * *

WBC light flyweight champ Brian Viloria's situation would have drawn a parallel, had he won the gold in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, where he competed.

Unlike Vicki, though, Brian is a full-blooded Filipino, if not a full-blooded Ilocano, whose values remain Filipino.

"We respect our elders, we never talk back and we obey our parents. At dusk, all of us kids are expected to be in the house and we all follow this rule. I have had my share of whackings from my dad's belt when I've been a bad boy," related Brian who would never dream of calling 911 to report his dad for child abuse, like American kids do, faced with a similar situation.

Brian delighted sportswriters with his wit and gift of gab during a mini press conference at Oakwood last Thursday.

* * *

Brian said he had tried other disciplines like judo, wrestling, table and lawn tennis, but none made his adrenalin flow as much as boxing.

"Even my own manager Gary Gittelsohn has advised me to get out of boxing if I could, because it was too dangerous, but I just couldn't. It's my passion," Brian said.

While his father Ben chooses not to talk him out of his chosen sport, he admits that he freezes up every time Brian is in action.

"More than the actual bouts, what really scares me is the sparring. *Kasi yung mga kalaban niya sa* actual fights, *kasing liit lang niya. Yung mga ka-spar niya, malalaki di hamak sa kanya,*" Ben said.

* * *

Brian at 25, is unattached. He doesn't even have a girlfriend because "right now, I'm married to boxing," a sport which he would've given up had Ruben Contreras, the Mexican fighter whom he sent into a coma with his deadly punches last year, died.

"I had sleepless nights after that fight. I kept thinking of Contreras' family. What would happen to them if he died. I would never have forgiven myself."

It was also Contreras who gave him back his career because he recovered completely. The incident is behind him now.

If Manny Pacquiao chose to Jericho Rosales to portray him in a film about his life, who would Brian pick to portray him?

"Ogie Alcasid!" Brian replied without batting an eyelash. "They say I look very much like him."

Saragoza seizes command with 72

SARAGOZA: Despite a double bogey on No.6

LIPA CITY—BOYET SARAGOZA OVERCAME A DOUBLE-bogey on the sixth hole en route to an even-par 72 yesterday and snatched a one-stroke lead over first-round leader Michael Bibat halfway through the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour grand finals at the Summit Point Golf and Country Club here yesterday.

The 33-year-old Saragoza, one down at the start of the day, quickly tied Bibat with a birdie on No. 3 but yielded two shots on No. 6. Saragoza fought back with three more birdies to cushion two other bogeys for nines of 36-36 at the water-laced Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed layout.

That was Saragoza's second straight 72 as he moved in front with a 144, one shot clear of Bibat, who failed to recover from a 38 start and wound up with 74.

Jungolfer Tonton Asistio actually dished out the strongest among the five championship division finalists, going two-under after nine holes to gain a share of the lead with Saragoza. But he bogeyed No. 11, dropped two strokes on No. 15 before losing another stroke on No. 17. He settled for a second straight 74 and 148, four off Saragoza in the tournament sponsored by Samsung and backed by Philippine Airlines, Tokyo Tokyo, KZG, Microtel, Coppertone Sport, Sunbolt, Rudy Project, C-Lium Fiber and Sports Plus. Media partners are Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3, 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite and Killer Bee.

Meanwhile, 35 qualifiers clash in a 36-hole duel in various divisions for men and ladies beginning today.

Erwin Vinluan, a Nomura Cup veteran, shot a one-over par 73 but remained six strokes adrift with a 150, while Jong Laput skied to an 82 and is out of it with 158.

W. Wack ladies shut out Highlands in Fed Golf

STANDINGS (Win-Draw-Loss-Points)

Group I—Wack Wack 5-0-0-11; Highlands 4-0-1-10; Southwoods 2-0-3-5; Orchard 2-0-4-4; Northwoods 1-0-5-2.

Group II—Riviera 4-1-1-6.5; Forest Hills 2-1-1-5.5; Alabang 1-2-1-3.5; Sta. Elena 1-0-3-2

UNSTOPPABLE WACK WACK REPEATED over a visiting defending champion Tagaytay Highlands in rousing fashion recently to gain the edge in their tight race for the automatic semifinals berth in Group I of the Ladies Federation Golf League.

Vicky Farrales-Elo Campos (alternate shot), Bing Liboro-Nicole Serapio (high-low) and Claudette Santiago-Katya dela Cruz (aggregate) all posted close victories for a crunching 3-0 sweep as Wack Wack nailed its fifth straight victory.

Getting a bonus point for the sweep that was more convincing than their previous win over Tagaytay in an away outing, the still unbeaten Wack Wack boosted its league-leading total to 11 points, one up on Tagaytay which suffered only its second loss in six matches.

The two frontrunning teams are far ahead of the pack in the chase for the semifinal slot in Group I as third-running Southwoods lies six points behind at 5 points.

In Group II, Riviera leads with 6.5 points after being held to a draw by a resurgent Alabang squad in its recent outing.

Forest Hills likewise boosted its own semifinal bid with a 2.5-0.5 trashing of a slumping Sta. Elena.

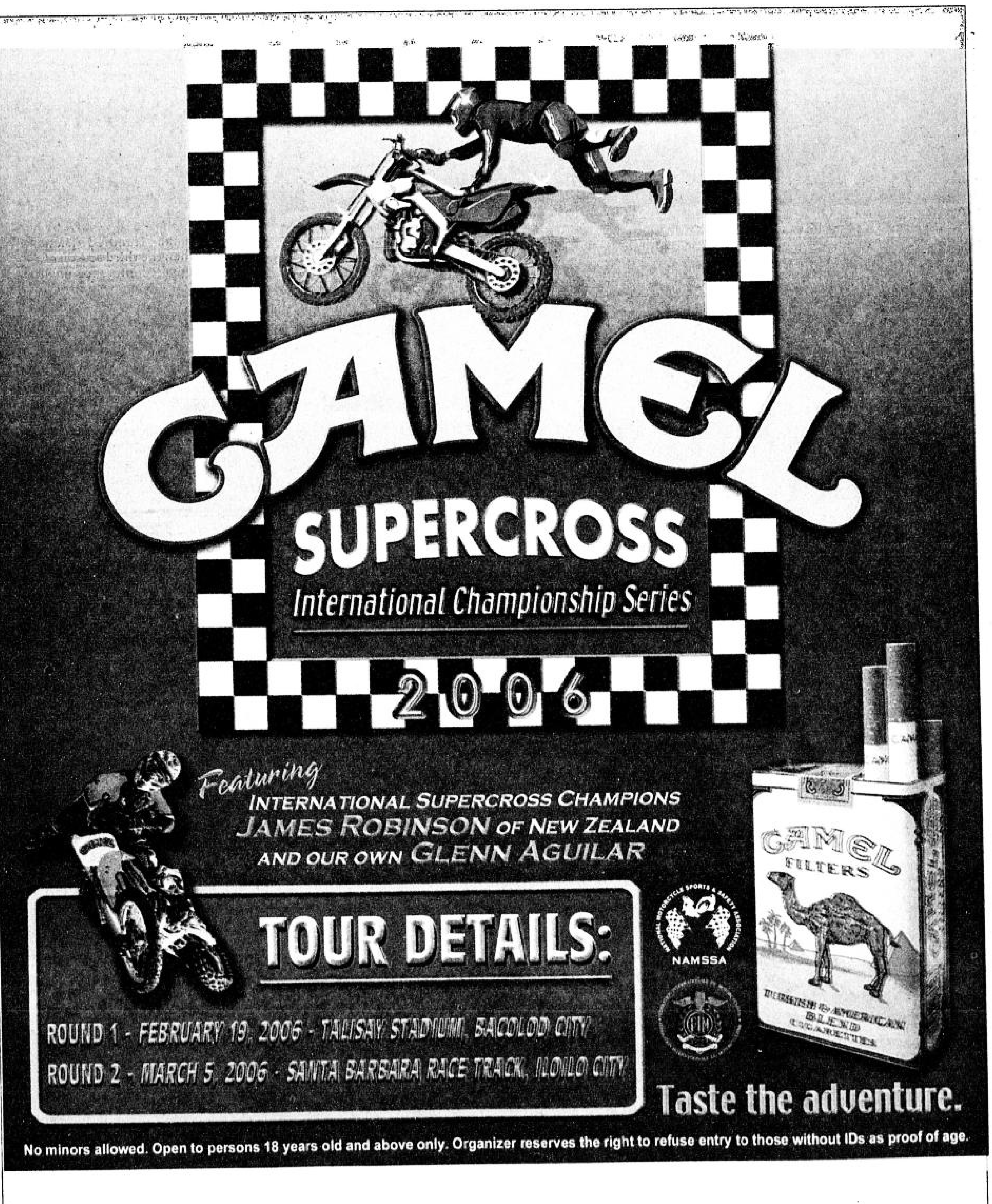
Forest Hills moved up to solo second with 5.5 points, including the extra point earned from the win, which was its second in four games.

Irene Dy-Grace Atienza (alternate shot) and Jee Cabochan-Nelda Roguel (high-low) won their respective matches while Violy Pegels-Lily Young split the aggregate point with Alice Jose-Lily Chan for Forest's needed points.

The top three teams from each group will advance to the playoff rounds with the teams topping their respective groups getting outright passage to the semifinals. The four remaining teams will go through the quarterfinals following the same home-and-away format, with the No. 3 seed facing No. 6 and No. 4 battling No. 5.

The winner of the duel between the third and sixth seeds will face the No. 2 seed, and the victor of the playoff involving the fourth and fifth seeds collide with the top seed in the semifinals.

While Wack Wack and Tagaytay are dominating their group, it's still a close fight in the other group going into the last three rounds of the eliminations.



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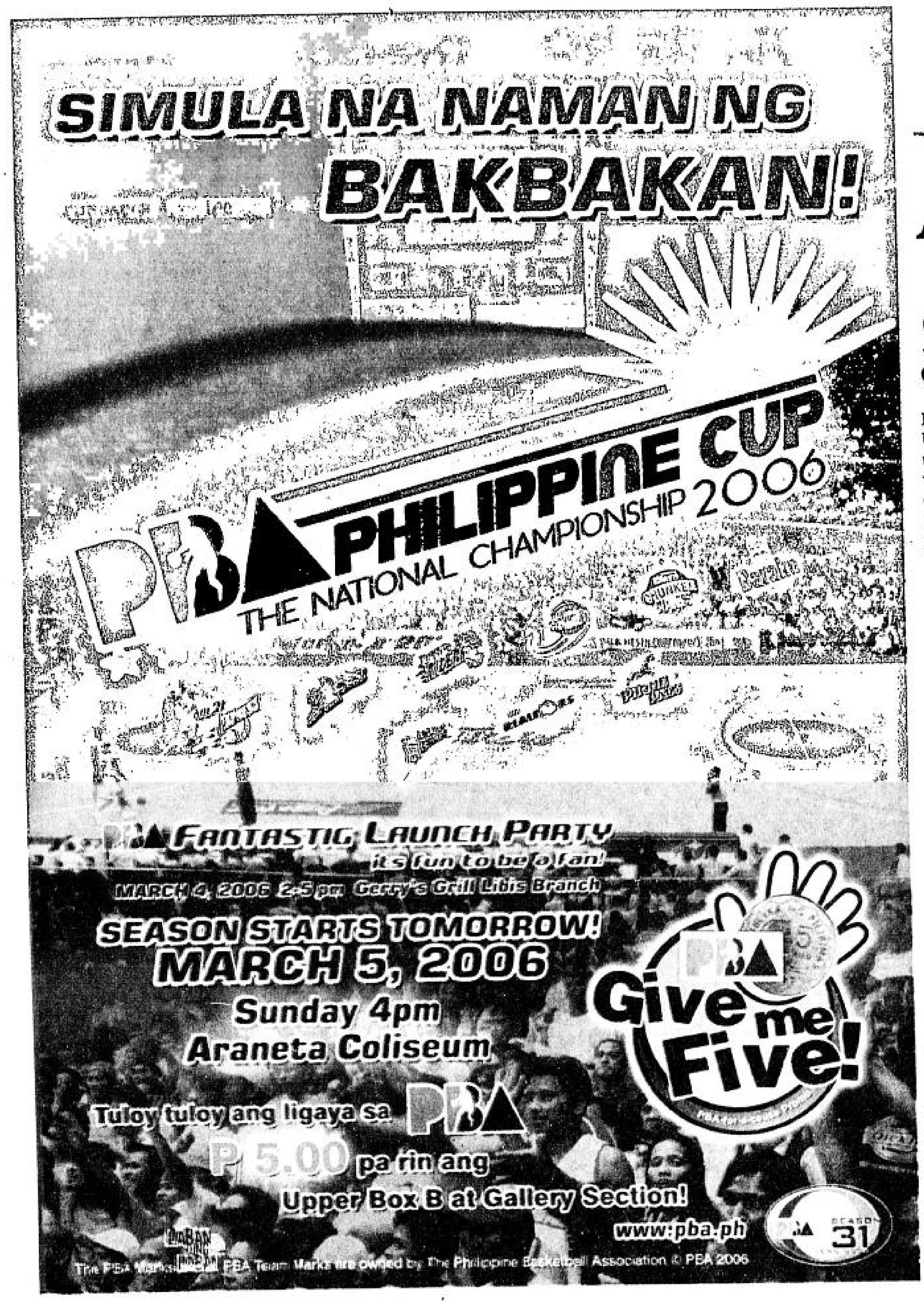
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SPORTS

Altas, Bulldogs gain; AMA wins

LEGAZPI CITY—DEFENDING CHAMPION University of Perpetual Help-Rizal and National Capital Region titlist National University routed separate opponents Thursday to advance to the quarterfinals of the 60th National Students Basketball Championships at the Albay Astrodome here.

The UPHR Altas trounced Our Lady of Lourdes College Foundation, 105-67, to secure the No. 2 spot in Group A with a 4-1 card behind West Negros College (5-0).

The NU Bulldogs, on the other hand, routed University of San Carlos (Region VII), 88-53, to also gain second spot with a similar 4-1 slate behind Angeles University Foundation (5-0) in Group B.

AMA Computer University shared the limelight when it downed Aquinas University, 95-50, to secure its first-ever title in the distaff side.

Pint-sized Penly Pasadia scored 20 points, mostly from the outside, to lead the AMACU Titans. Paula Lontok added 16, Happy Ong 14 and Anttonette Yao 13 for the Charmaine Salalila-coached Titans, the reigning Naascu champions.

Hulking Vladimir Joe scored 21 points, Kiel Misa 20 and Fritz Bauzon 14 as the Bai Cristobal-mentored Altas toyed with the Daet-based OLLCF Dolphins.

Edwin Asoro finished with 25 points, Jonathan Fernandez had 11 and Cris Catamora and Cyrus Malagueña had 10 points each for the Bulldogs, who took a 35-25 halftime lead.

Enrico Llanto finished with 19 points for the USC Warriors, who dropped to 3-2.

The Altas were still playing the Warriors at the start of the quarterfinal round yesterday, while the Bulldogs were slated to play Region V's Our Lady of Lourdes College Foundation in the other quarterfinal pairing of the tournament organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Over in Daet, Camarines Norte, Zamboanga City's Southern City College stunned Cebu's Salazar College of Science and Technology, 97-89, yesterday in the high school division at the Agro Multi Purpose and Recreational Center.

University of Southern Philippines Baby Panthers, also of Cebu, dumped University of Batangas, 123-60, to join SCC on top of the standing.

In other games, Iloilo Central High School beat Davao City's Emar Learning Center, 85-74, while NCR's St. Claire Academy blasted Tacloban City's Asian Development Foundation College, 122-64.

Gonzales drops GM bid

FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER JAYSON Gonzales drew with Ukrainian GM Oleg Romanishin and blew his bid for a GM title in the seventh round of the IX Open International Malaga de Ajedrez Thursday night in Malaga, Spain. Gonzales notched 5.0 points and shared 8th to 12th places. GM Nelson Mariano II also drew with IM Eirik Gullaksen of Norway to score 4.5 points. ***NM Marlon Bernardino***

Las Piñas cockfest today

ALL ROADS LEAD TO LAS PIÑAS COLISEUM TODAY for a special 4-cock derby that will feature 70 matches. Derby host Raymund Burgos said among the entries are former Mayor Nene Aguilar, Gerry

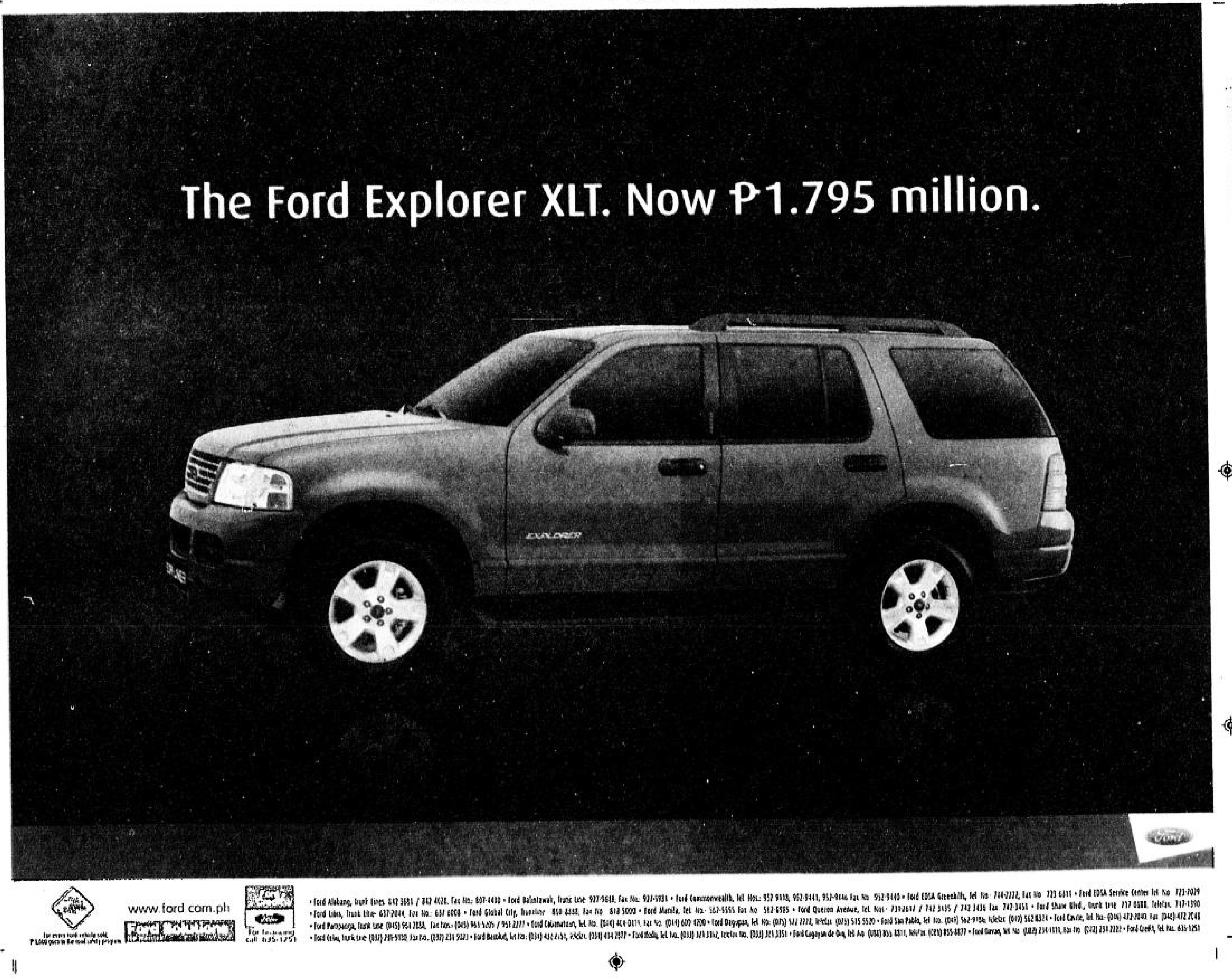
SPORTSWATCH

Ramos, Sonny Lagon, Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud, William Co, Patrick Antonio, Emil Chua, Tony Marfori, Efren Canlas, Pepito Ngo, Rolly Ligon and Danny Ty. Call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

Makati Coliseum derbies

TWO BIG COCKFESTS ARE SLATED AT THE MAKATI Coliseum. The Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby is set March 6 with 70 fights lined up, according to promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. On March 13, Manny Pacquiao will host a 5-cock super derby, assisted by Wakee Salud and Gov. Chavit Singson. Call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

(Before running this ad, the editor had to check if there were any typographical errors.)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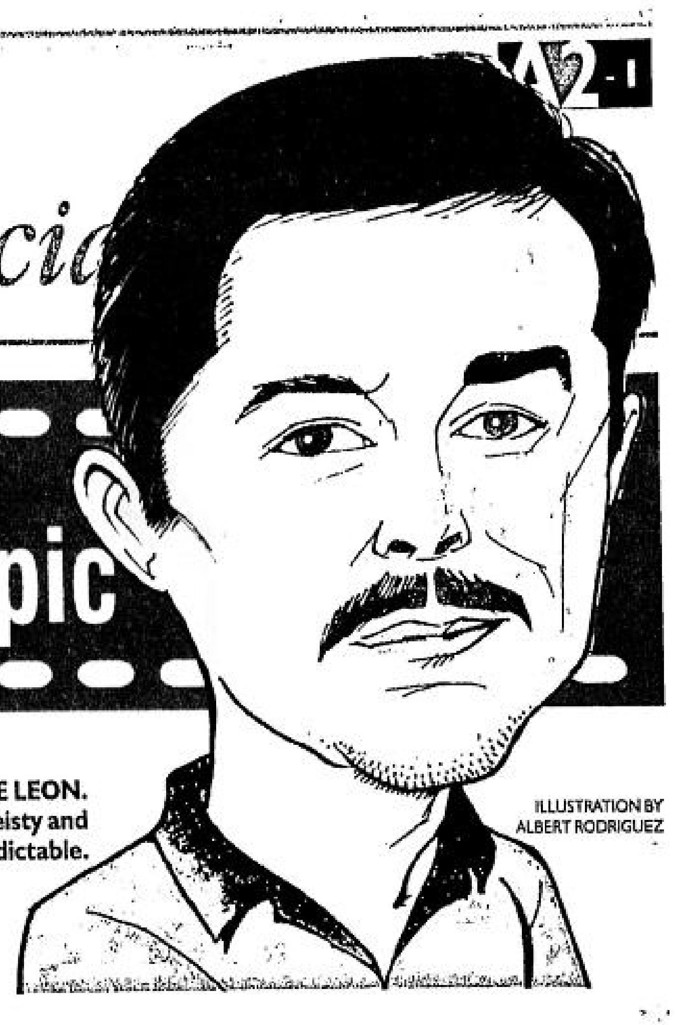
NOW SHOWING

Hoffman mines Oscar gold in witty biopic



DE LEON. Feisty and unpredictable.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Rito P. Asilo

"Capote"

B: Bennett Miller
S: Philip Seymour Hoffman

PERSONAL DEMONS HAD CONSISTENTLY hounded Truman Capote (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the flamboyant author of 1965's "In Cold Blood," the pioneering nonfiction masterpiece about the massacre of the Clutter family at the hands of Perry Smith (Clifton Collins Jr.) and Richard Hickock (Mark Pellegrino).

Bennett Miller's outstanding biopic is not à birth-to-death chronicle of Capote's life and career, and focuses on a significant period: From "In Cold Blood's" conception to its publication six years later.

In the course of research, Truman's fascination with Smith drew out the author's moral ambiguity and confusion, and brought him his biggest success—and his eventual downfall. But, Capote's "infatuation" with his subject was not entirely selfish.

As he later explained: "It's like Perry and I grew up in the same house—and one day, he went out the back door, and I went out the front." Make no mistake: Smith and Hickock *were* guilty, and the book's title couldn't be more appropriate.

In the end, the distraught writer's confusion mirrors what we feel about life's confounding issues—knowing what's right and wrong, and hoping the hard choices we make will matter in the bigger scheme of things.

"Nasaan si Francis?"

D: Gabby Fernandez
S: Epi Quizon, Christopher de Leon

Where is Francis (Epi Quizon)? Well, he is dead. And hapless crooks, Boy and Sonny (Paolo Contis and Rico Blanco, respectively), are in a mad rush to get their hands on their not-so-dearly departed friend's expensive drug stash hidden in the clutter of Francis' house.

Gabby Fernandez's directorial debut possesses the frenetic wit and off-kilter humor that characterize the cinematic oeuvre of his mentors, Peque Gallaga and Lore Reyes. However, likable characters and fast-paced storytelling don't a satisfying movie make.

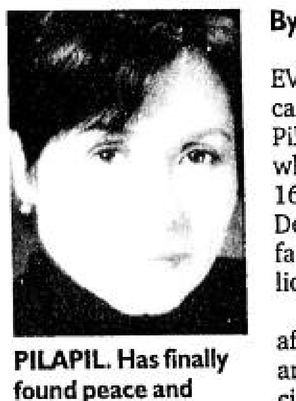
Despite its short running time (it clocks at one hour and 23 minutes), the novelty of the narrative's dead-body premise swiftly loses steam—not unlike the kitschy running gag that likewise hobbled Ted Kotcheff's silly cautionary trifle, 1989's "Weekend at Bernie's."

Yes, this *is* comedy. But, even comedies need a plausible plot to maintain suspension of disbelief and rein in implausibilities.

The film, though, has a plus point that makes it immensely watchable: The out-of-the-box performances of topnotch actors, who inhabit their characters with thespic flourish and feisty abandon—particularly Christopher de Leon, who works his stellar charm when the drug his character accidentally ingests starts to kick in. Rio Locsin is also a fun revelation as Bel, the abusive whorehouse madam.

Unfortunately, acting is just one of the many components that makes a movie work.

Face to face with Pilar Pilapil



PILAPIL. Has finally found peace and happiness.

By Nestor U. Torre

EVER SINCE SHE BEcame Binibining Pilipinas Universe when she was only 16 years old, Pilar Delilah Pilapil has fascinated the public.

Her stellar career, affairs with the rich and famous and socialite lifestyle have made her one of the most colorful and mediagenic personalities on the local scene for more than 30 years.

Surprising development

Of late, however, Pilar has pretty much kept to herself, staying away from Manila's mad media circus. But, it turns out that Pilar's life has gone into its most surprising development to date: She's dedicated herself to God, married a pastor, and finally found the peace and happiness that eluded her for decades.

This update comes from Pilar herself, by way of her newly-published autobiography, "The Woman Without A Face (The Life Story of Pilar Pilapil)."

The compact book is characterized by almost painful honesty, with Pilar citing the key events in her life that made her such an emotional wreck for so many years.

She also names names (well, first names, at least) when she writes about the famous men she's been involved with. Through all of this, however, we sense that she isn't blaming them for the mess her life occasionally became.

Indeed, she forthrightly declares that she's responsible for all the bad choices she's made, ill-advised decisions that sometimes sent her hurtling down a dead-end street.

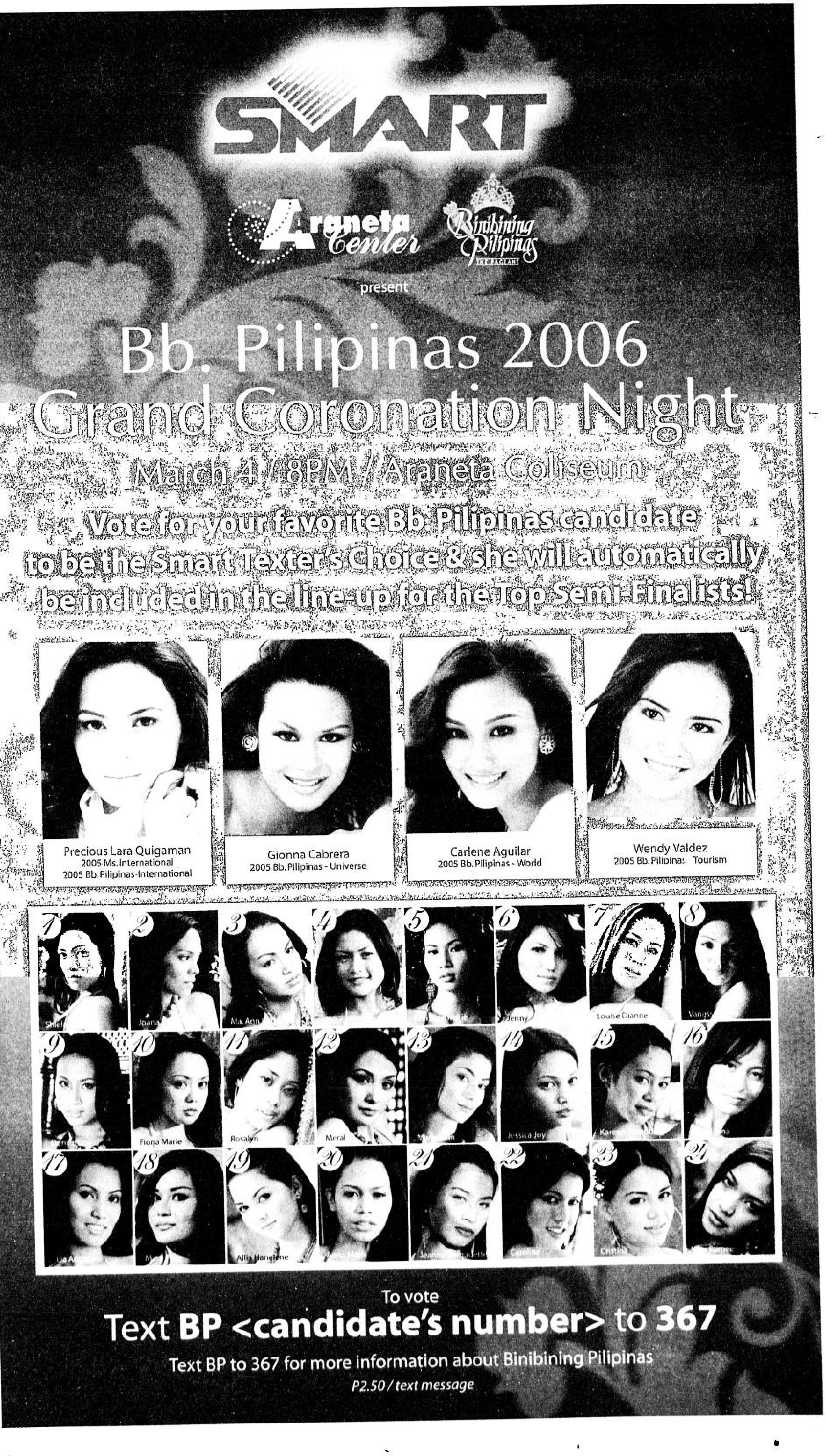
This, despite the low blows that others have given her—the relative who traumatized her, the lovers who abused her, the holier-than-thou types who pelted her with psychologically bruising rocks.

Incendiary advantage

These, plus a suicide attempt, are scrupulously detailed in Pilar's autobiography—not to scorch its pages to incendiary advantage, but to make sense of her troubled life.

Helping Pilar in achieving this illumination

FACE/ A2-2



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'Pop Heartthrob'

BAUTISTA. First major solo concert at Aliw Theater.

MARK BAUTISTA, THE former smalltown boy from Cagayan de Oro City, is finally starring in his first major solo concert at Aliw Theater on March 24. His special guests are Sarah Geronimo, Juris of MYMP, Ogie Alcasid and Rufa Mae Quinto.

Mark returns to his musical roots in his March 24 concert, "Pop Heartthrob." He'll also be expanding his repertoire, and doing cuts form his latest gold album, "Mark Bautista: Dream On (Expanded Version)."

His first single from the 12-track album was "I Need You." He's followed up with "You Win the Game," which he's been extensively promoting. Mark is also unveiling a sexier performing persona at his Aliw Theater show. Call 911-5555.

MONTAGE

'Trollz' premieres on Nickelodeon

On March 5, the Nickelodeon Channel invites viewers to enter the enchanting world of "Trollz," where only Troll girls have magical powers—and the boys are totally bummed about it!

"Trollz" focuses on five girlfriends who live in the whimsical city of Trollzpolis in the 21st century. The girls have the same fun and problems that human kids have—and the existence of Troll magic gives them another world to deal with, including sinister creatures and spirits. Can the girls handle the responsibility of defending Trollzpolis against them? Catch "Trollz," premiering at 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. tomorrow on the Nickelodeon channel.

'Red Carpet Manila 2006'

The 78th Academy Awards airs live on March 6 at 9 a.m. and primetime at 7 p.m. on the Prime Shift on RPN-9 (Channel 14 on Sky Gold and Silver, and Destiny Cable).

Prime Shift also reunites with Mandarin Oriental Manila to stage "Red Carpet Manila 2006" on March 6 at 7 p.m.

The Mandarin's Captain's Bar will be the posh venue for a wide-screen uninterrupted viewing of the Oscars, and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra will also serenade film buffs with songs from the movies as they dine with Manila's finest. Plus luxurious gift bags from Rustan's, Summit Media and the Mandarin Oriental for the evening's celebrity guests!

Manila Dragons Cup

The Manila Dragons Dragonboat Rowing Team will host the first Manila Dragons Cup tomorrow in Manila Bay. The race is the only dragonboat marathon sanctioned by the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation (PDBF). The team commemorates its 15th anniversary this year.

Call Jong Valientes at 0917 817-2071 or Greg Doronila at 0922 810-9457.

Accolade for MVP

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

FRIENDS AND COLleagues came in full force for the conferment of the Management Man of the Year award on Manuel V. Pangilinan by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) at the Manila Mandarin recently.

Simplicity

MVP's acceptance speech was brilliant in its simplicity. He recounted PLDT's uphill climb to get back on its feet, and its rise to be among the "Best Managed Companies in the Philippines and Asia."

Pangilinan attributes his success "to the basic prescription that you *can* succeed by doing the right thing—even in the Philippines' awkward environment." He stresses that business leadership has three basic elements: Competence, passion, and integrity. And passion, MVP says, is the most important.

Transparency

He adds: "Success can only spring from old-fashioned values that are transcendent and endure well beyond the context and circumstance of time. The best insurance against the perils of crossing the ethical divide is transparency."

He believes that leaders must be "merchants of hope."

* * *

The Mandy Navasero Summer Photoworkshop will start on April 8 until May 27. The MN Batanes Photo Safari takes place from April 12 to 15 (jointly with Fiesta Tours). Call 899-1767 or 896-3208.

PANGILINAN. Success springs from old-fashioned values.

E-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com

Face. . .

From page A2-1

is her straightforward but insightful writing style. Through the years, we've had good, long talks with Pilar, and we can vouch for the fact that her book is written pretty much the way she talks—candidily, passionately, and with great panache.

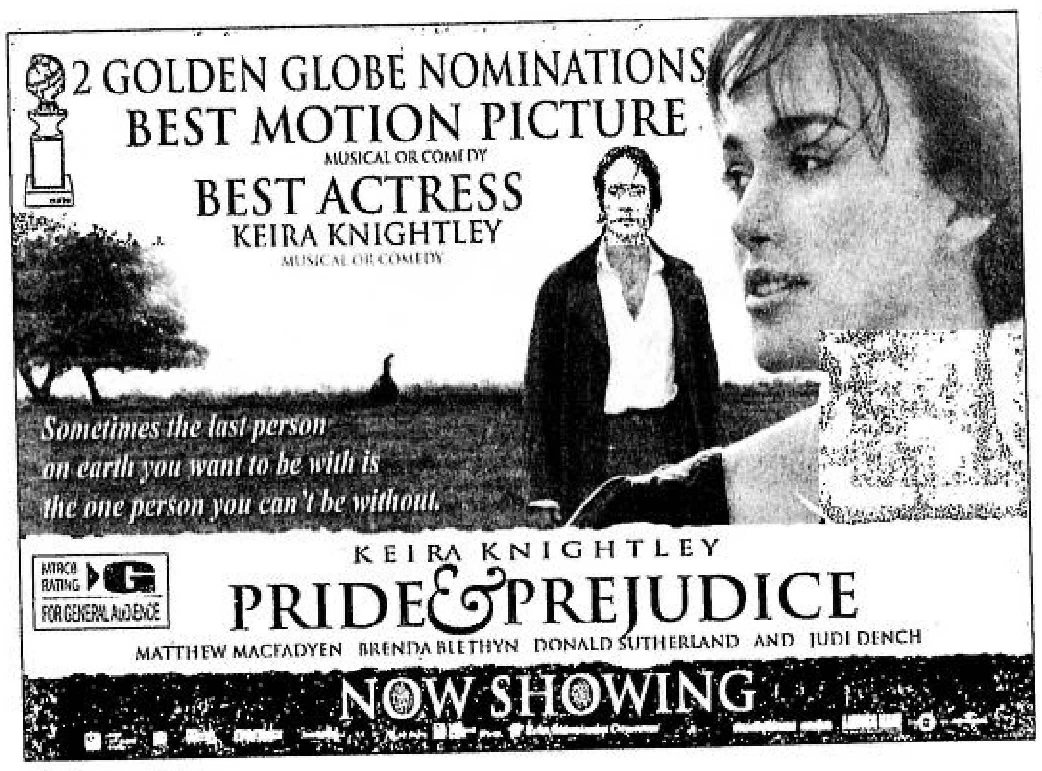
Admittedly, Pilar hasn't always been so insightful, but her years of confusion are clearly behind her, and her new maturity and perspicacity become her.

Writing "The Woman Without A Face" has been an upbeat, cathartic experience for Pilar, because it's enabled her to finally get a clarifying handle on her roller-coaster life.

Even better, Pilar's book is a good and similarly clarifying read for her readers, and should inspire them to make something special and giving of their own lives, as well.

Finally, why does Pilar title her book, "The Woman Without A Face"? The author herself provides the answer: "For many years, I did what everyone wanted me to do, I soared to the greatest heights, only to discover that I was empty, and did not have a face of my own."

Happily, now she has a clear countenance—and it's beautiful, indeed.



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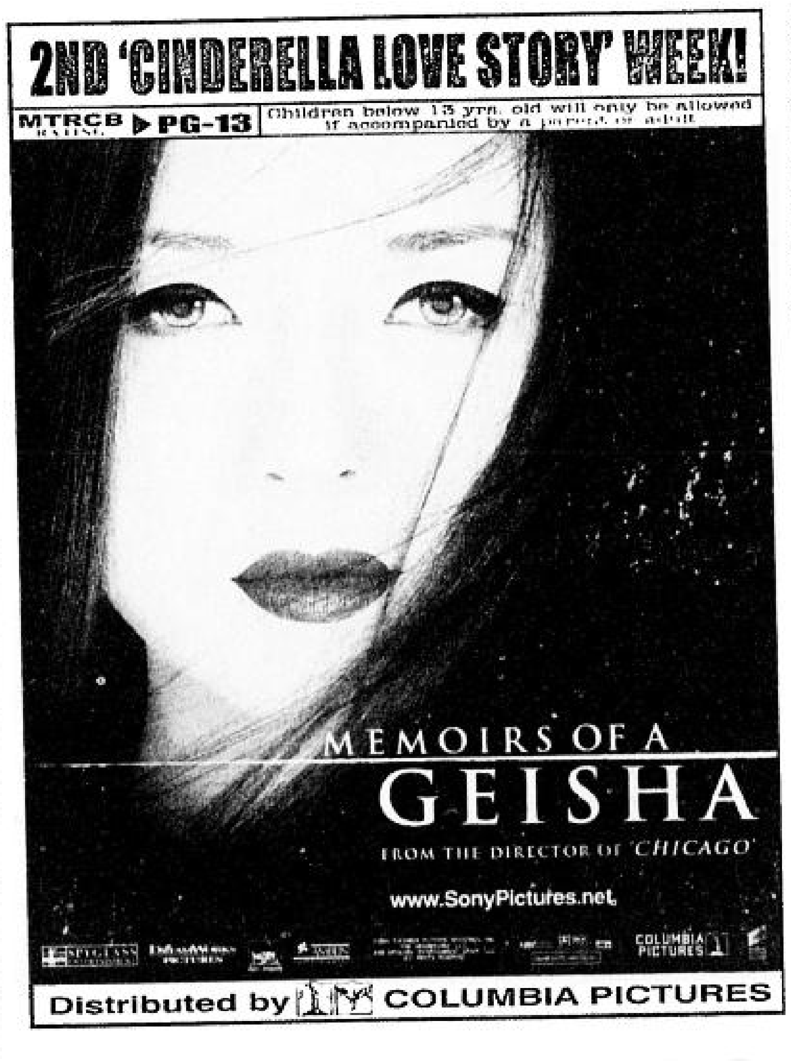

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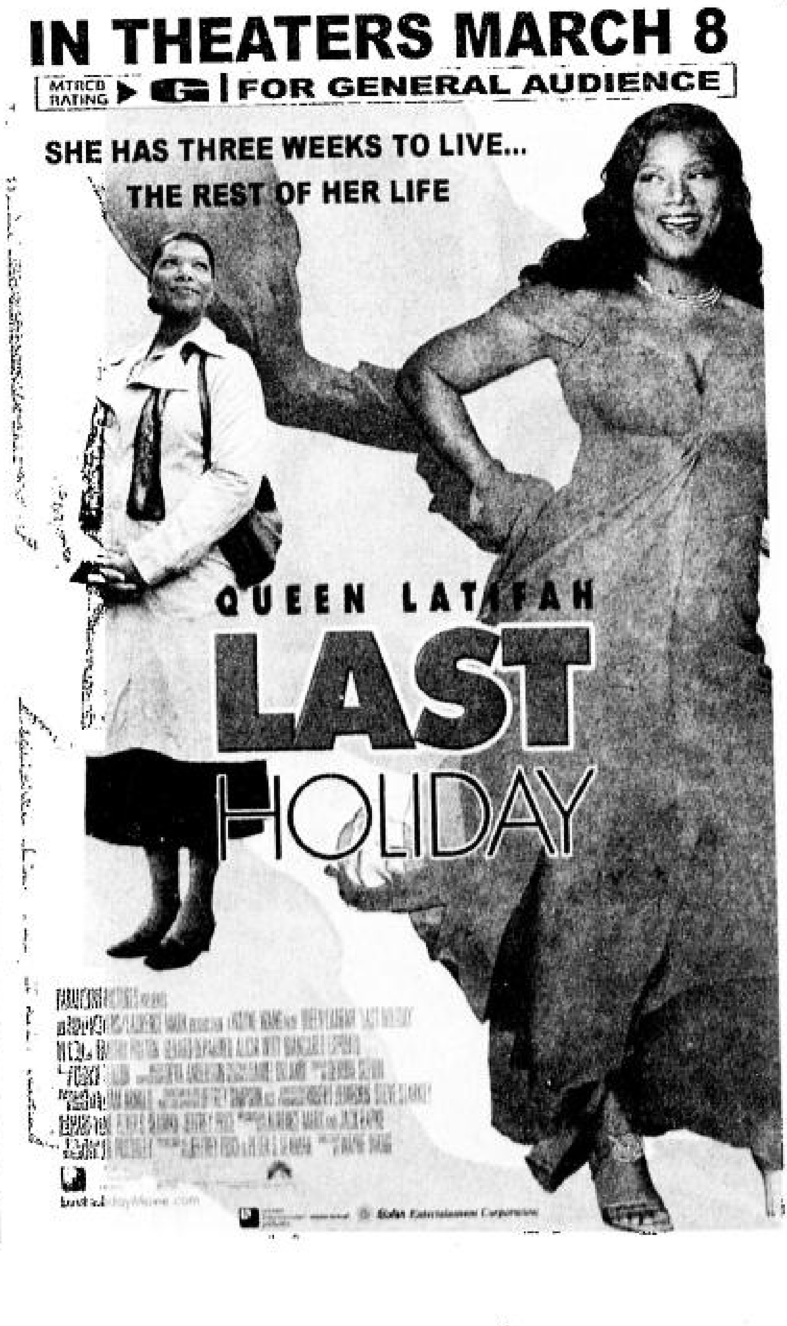

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SHE HAS THREE WEEKS TO LIVE...
THE REST OF HER LIFE
QUEEN LATIFAH
LAST HOLIDAY

Chips off the old blocks

By Behn Cervantes

POWER. One of Hollywood's handsomest actors in the '40s and '50s.

THERE IS TRUTH TO the saying that relatives of celebrities often suffer from unfair comparison. For example, John Wayne's son could hardly match his father's stellar appeal. The senior Wayne was tall, strapping and charismatic. He was already a living legend when his son decided to follow his footsteps.

Conventional

Wayne's son, Patrick, was a fine-looking young fellow. In fact, he was better-looking than his dad, but he was handsome in a rather conventional manner. John, on the other hand, had uniquely handsome, rugged features.

Patrick never took advantage of his father's influence. However, he *did* appear in his father's films, like "The Green Beret," but none of those minor roles were good enough for viewers to remember him.

Tyrone Power was one of Hollywood's handsomest matinee idols in the '40s and '50s. So, when he married the sultry Linda Christian, it was no surprise that their daughter, Romina, would be a beautiful bundle of joy.

After Tyrone divorced Linda, Linda turned her eyes on her lovely daughter. She knocked on Tinseltown's doors to jumpstart her daughter's career—to no avail.

Disappearance

A few years ago, it was reported that Romina ran around with a shady group in Miami. Later, she mysteriously disappeared. Sadly, her disappearance has remained unsolved.

One of the most famous celebrity offsprings is Lisa Marie Presley, a troubled young woman who doesn't know if she should sing like her father, Elvis Presley, or become an actress like her mother, Priscilla.

Lisa Marie is best known as the ex-wife of Michael Jackson. She later divorced Jackson, married Nicolas Cage—and just as quickly divorced the actor!

POWER PLANT
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Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
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FEARLESS PG13 1:35,3:50,6:05,8:20,10:30	FINAL DESTINATION 3 R13 1:05,3:15,5:25, 7:35,9:45	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE G 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15

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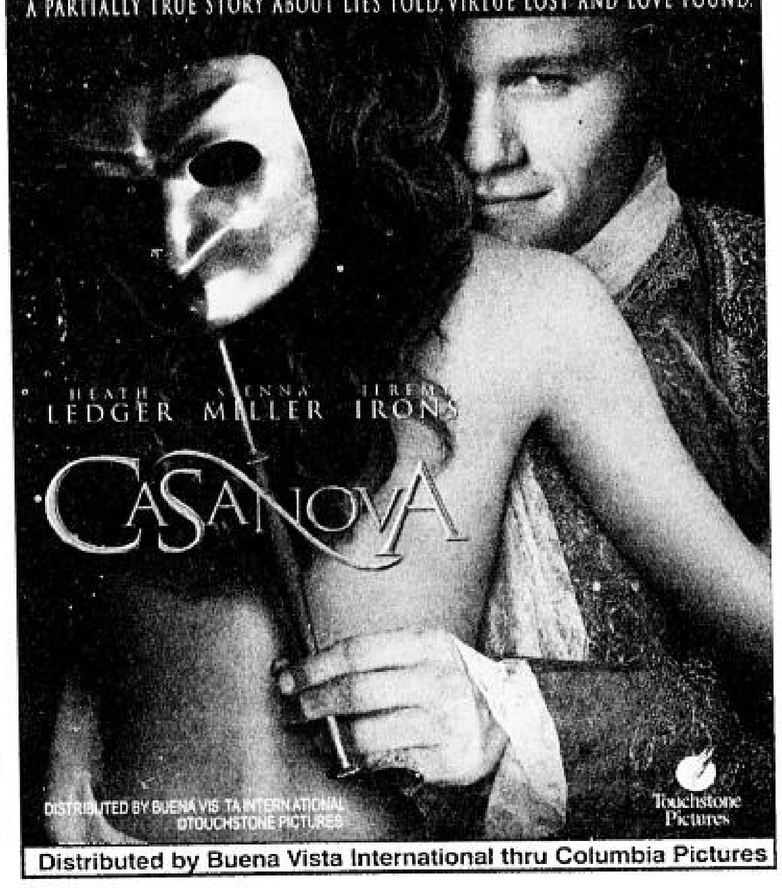
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CASANOVA
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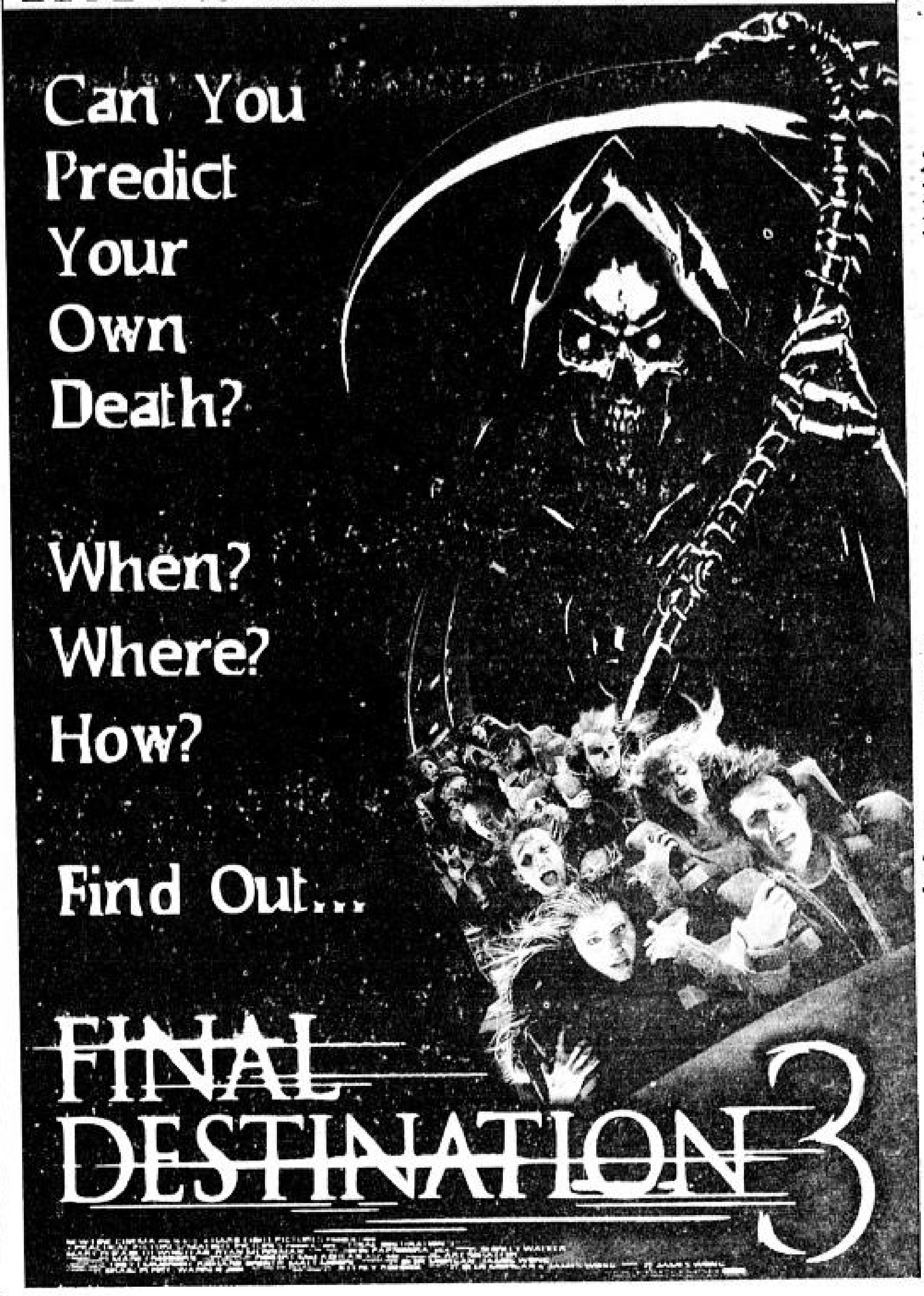
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Your
Own
Death?
When?
Where?
How?
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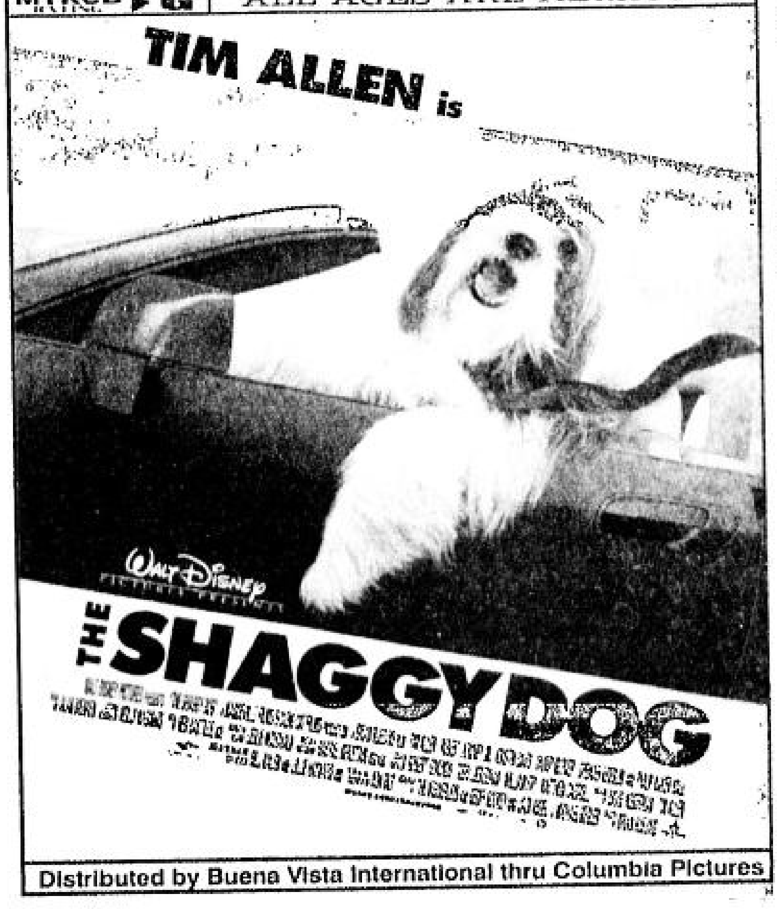
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Grit, spectacle in 'Bullet in A Bible'

GREEN DAY. Consummate showmen.

By Noelani Torre

GREEN DAY'S CD/DVD COMBO, "BULLET IN A Bible," isn't just an audio-visual record of the band's biggest gig thus far, but also what may conceivably be called the biggest concert ever in punk rock history.

A documentation of the group's two-day June 2005 performance for an audience totaling 130,000 at the National Bowl in Milton Keynes, England, "Bullet" will show you why this Bay Area trio is now considered one of the brightest stars on the rock firmament.

Debut

When they hit the scene with their successful major-label debut, "Dookie," back in 1994, people were interested, *but* also a bit dismissive. Certainly, nobody predicted that lead singer/guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong, bassist Mike Dirnt, and drummer Tré Cool would become punk's most popular poster boys.

Ten years after "Dookie," Green Day came up with the Grammy-winning "American Idiot," and cemented its superstar status.

Strongly political, the album not only refocused the spotlight on Green Day, it also showed people that the still bratty thirtysomething threesome was one of today's most relevant bands.

The critical dissent and mistrust of authority imbedded in "American Idiot" struck a strong chord with the dissatisfied post-9/11 youth, and you can see just how intense the reaction has been when you have a look/listen to "Bullet in A Bible."

Anthemic

With a background of 65,000 screaming voices, the set kicks off with the anthemic "American Idiot." There's more than a touch of incendiary anti-American and anti-war sentiment here, and a highly energetic Armstrong tells an equally pepped-up crowd "to sing so loud that every redneck in America hears you tonight, all right?!"

It all seems highly jejune, but it's actually very effective. These guys are consummate showmen—they consciously styled the show to be a spectacle. Skill alone won't cut it, however, and Green Day infuse their performance with a grit and dynamism that contribute largely to the overall success of their performance.

Illusions

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

WE EXPERIENCE difficulties in our relationships in this world because we harbor illusions about our situation.

Here are illusions that we need to be aware of and eventually give up:

1. "This person that I desire is mine and will always be mine." The reality is: We do *not* belong to anybody but the Supreme Owner.

Possession

A person is not anyone's possession. Everyone is eternally part and parcel of the Supreme Owner. No contract or agreement can claim ownership of a living being.

With the knowledge that we all belong to God, we must respect living beings and never attempt to force them to serve us.

2. "I will always take care of you." No one is in full control of his destiny. We can't always be around when an accident happens, when people are suddenly taken ill, or when our loved ones are distressed or lonely.

3. "I need real love and attention. Please satisfy me." We desire deep and unconditional love. No one can satisfy the soul's insatiable craving for love and attention except the Supreme Beloved.

We are empty cups seeking to be filled by other empty cups. We give our hearts to next-door crushes, movie idols, imaginary dream partners. We beg love from other beggars!

Unconditional

Seek love from the overflowing source of unconditional and eternal love: the Supreme Being. Only He can satisfy our need to be fully loved. From this foremost relationship, our love naturally expands to all of God's children.

Without illusions, there will be no frustrations.

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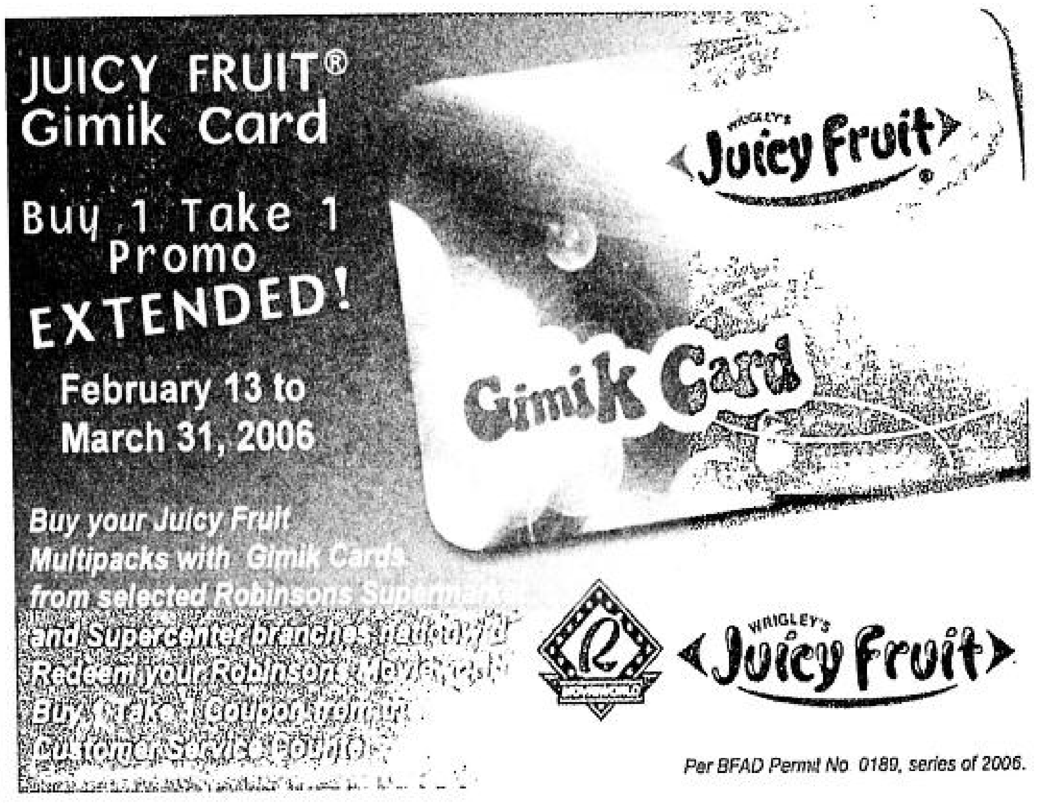
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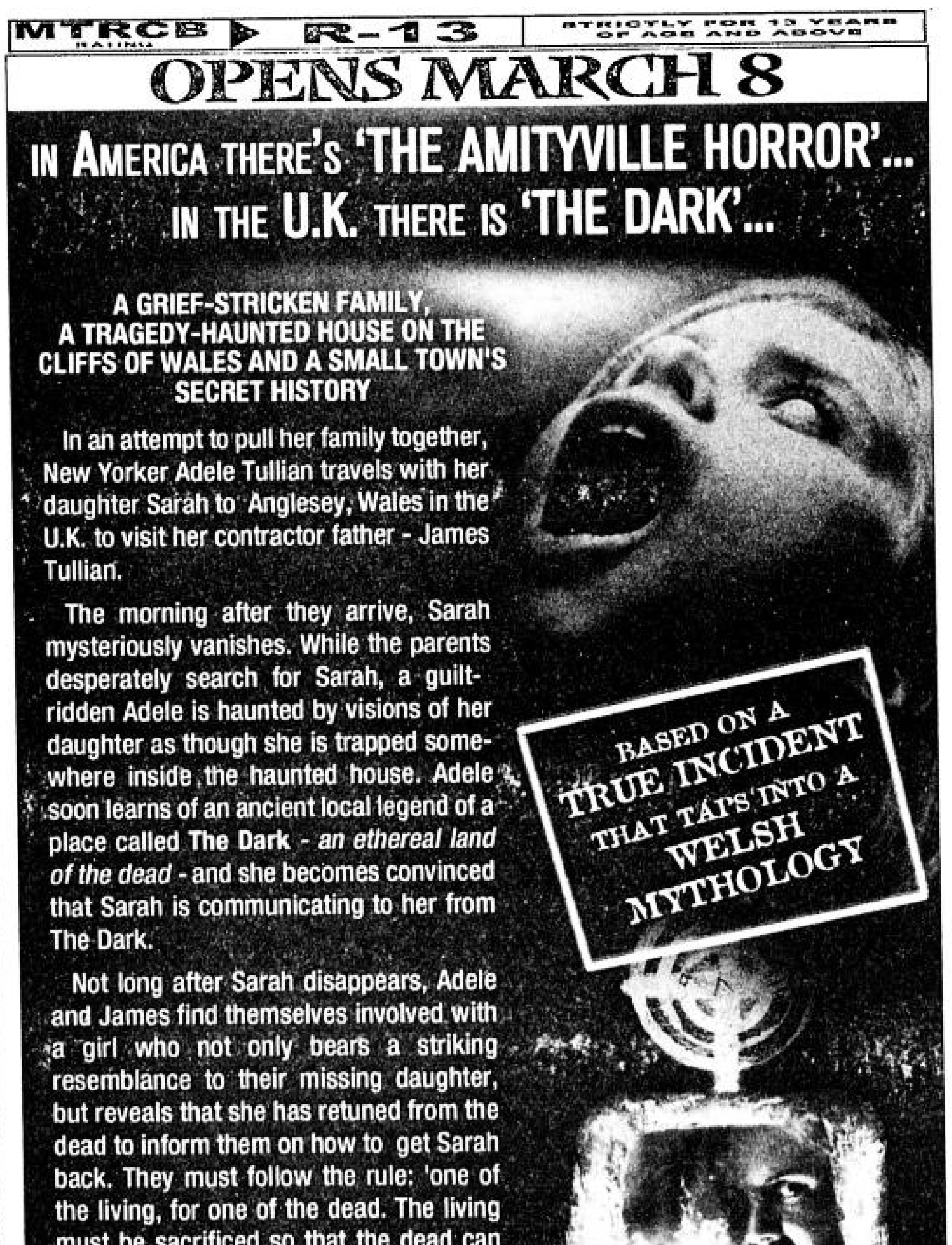
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OPENS MARCH 8
IN AMERICA THERE'S 'THE AMITYVILLE HORROR'... IN THE U.K. THERE IS 'THE DARK'...

A GRIEF-STRICKEN FAMILY, A TRAGEDY-HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE CLIFFS OF WALES AND A SMALL TOWN'S SECRET HISTORY

In an attempt to pull her family together, New Yorker Adele Tullian travels with her daughter Sarah to Anglesey, Wales in the U.K. to visit her contractor father - James Tullian.

The morning after they arrive, Sarah mysteriously vanishes. While the parents desperately search for Sarah, a guilt-ridden Adele is haunted by visions of her daughter as though she is trapped somewhere inside the haunted house. Adele soon learns of an ancient local legend of a place called The Dark - *an ethereal land of the dead* - and she becomes convinced that Sarah is communicating to her from The Dark.

Not long after Sarah disappears, Adele and James find themselves involved with a girl who not only bears a striking resemblance to their missing daughter, but reveals that she has retuned from the dead to inform them on how to get Sarah back. They must follow the rule: 'one of the living, for one of the dead. The living must be sacrificed so that the dead can return. Townsfolk suspect that the Tullians are succumbing to the legacy of madness and murder that overwhelmed the house's previous tenants.

BASED ON A TRUE INCIDENT THAT TAPS INTO A WELSH MYTHOLOGY

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SATURDAY *Special*

Second-guessing the Oscars

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

***FROM ANNA DARIO:* "Who are your bets for this year's Academy Awards derby?"**

After sitting through marathon movie screenings and going over the top choices of leading critics' groups and award-giving bodies, here's our fearless Oscar forecast:

Tragic romance trumps political themes in the best picture race, as Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain"—the film to beat at the 78th Academy Awards—gallops its way past Bennett Miller's "Capote," Paul Haggis' "Crash," George Clooney's "Good Night, and Good Luck" and Steven Spielberg's "Munich."

The big-screen adaptation of Annie Proulx's heartbreaking love story has, so far, won best picture nods at the Golden Globes, the Bafta, the Producers Guild, and in most critics' groups (NYFC, LAFC, Broadcast Film Critics, etc.)—*except* at the National Society of Film Critics (its choice: "Capote") and the National Board of Review ("Good Night, and Good Luck").

Mainstream

The groundbreaking "Brokeback Mountain" deserves accolades for its successful attempt to explore a touchy if timely subject matter and to bring its unconventional story to mainstream audiences. It deserves to win—and it will.

Lee, "Brokeback's" genre-busting director, has won the Directors Guild's nod twice, but has yet to bring home the Oscar.

HOFFMAN AND WITHERSPOON. Likely winners in the best actor and best actress categories, respectively.

His closest competitors in the directing derby are David Cronenberg ("A History of Violence") and Fernando Meirelles ("The Constant Gardener")—and they're *not* even nominated!

In the best actress category, it looks like a lock for Reese Witherspoon ("Walk the Line"),

SECOND-GUESSING/ A3-3

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NASAAN SI FRANCIS 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:20 / 4:10 RELASYON 6:00 / 6:35 / 7:10 / 9:30 / 9:50	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 PORTRAIT...ARTIST 9:00	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

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4	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30	5	NASAAN SI FRANCIS 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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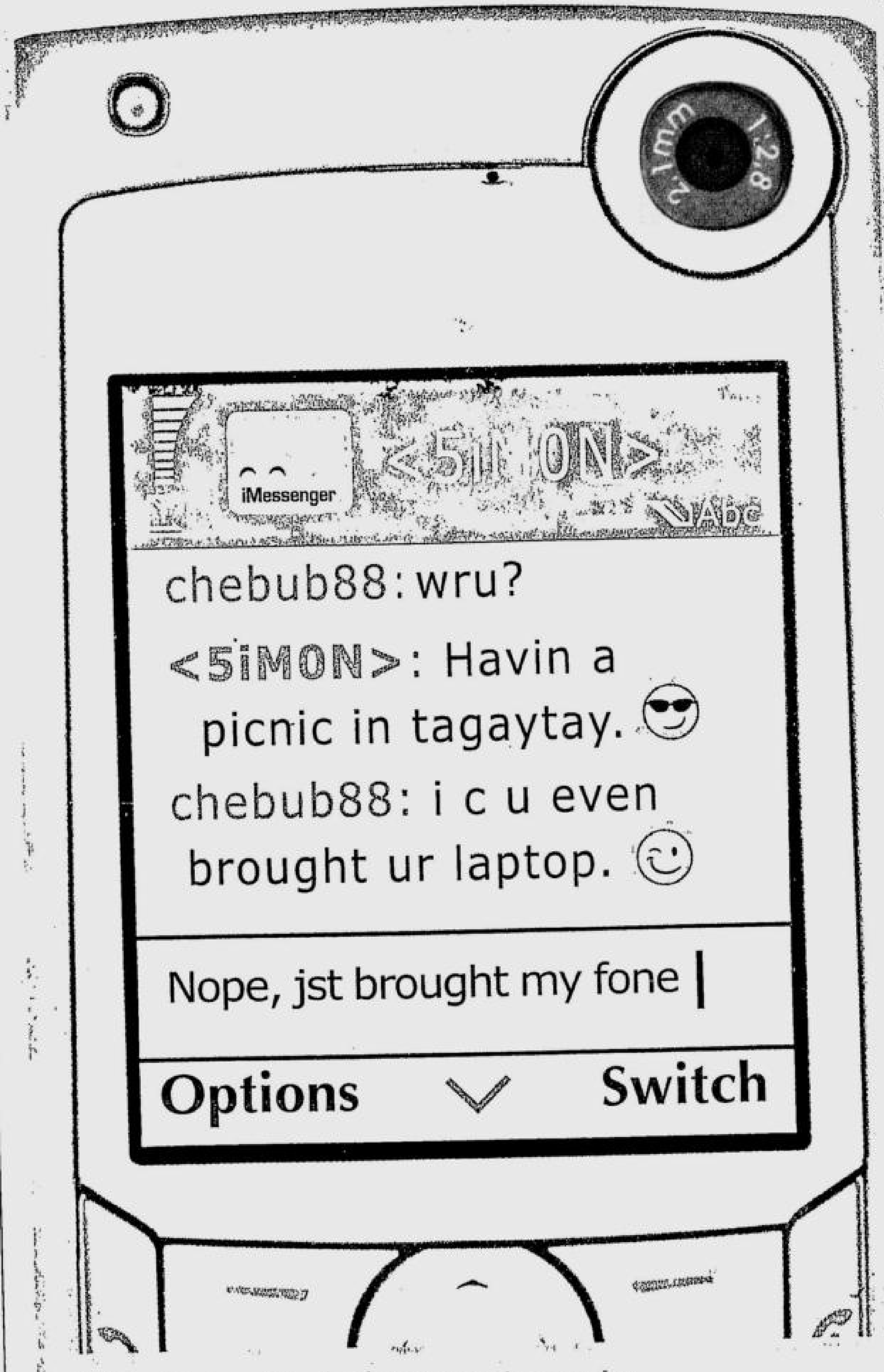

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SUN CELLULAR
Everything Important Is Under the Sun

'Pride and Prejudice' strikes all the right sparks

By Noelani Torre

JANE AUSTEN'S first and most beloved work, "Pride and Prejudice," has been made into a film no less than 10 times. Thus, the question: What does Joe Wright's new version of this classic tale of love and 18th-century manners have that earlier versions don't?

Fresh and vibrant

Of course you'd be hard put to answer that if you haven't seen all the other "P&P" movies, but if you've read the book itself, you'll agree that this particular cinematic reworking is fresh and vibrant.

Based on Austen's 1797 novel, this latest movie adaptation is, in fact, more red-blooded than the text. It is earthier, and at the same time, more romantic, no doubt so as to be more aligned to the taste of the younger generation.

Indeed, there is so much unrestrained emotion in the film that you'll wonder if you're actually in Brontë country and not Austenland.

The emotion is not confined to the characters themselves; it permeates the film's very air. The gorgeous landscape is apt to turn brooding, the characters get romantically drenched, and we even see the supposedly restrained and straitlaced Mr. Darcy galloping through a forest.

Then again, for an audience used to seeing melodrama and the graphic depiction of sexual gymnastics, all that probably sounds terribly undemonstrative.

Satirical eye

However, for Austen fans who appreciate her incisive and deceptively gentle satirical eye, this segue into a romanticism bordering on the gothic may come as a surprise. Whether or not it will be pleasant is a matter of taste.

The movie stars Keira Knightley as the bold and intelligent heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, and Matthew MacFadyen as the proud and mysterious Mr. Darcy. Both actors give us excellent portrayals.

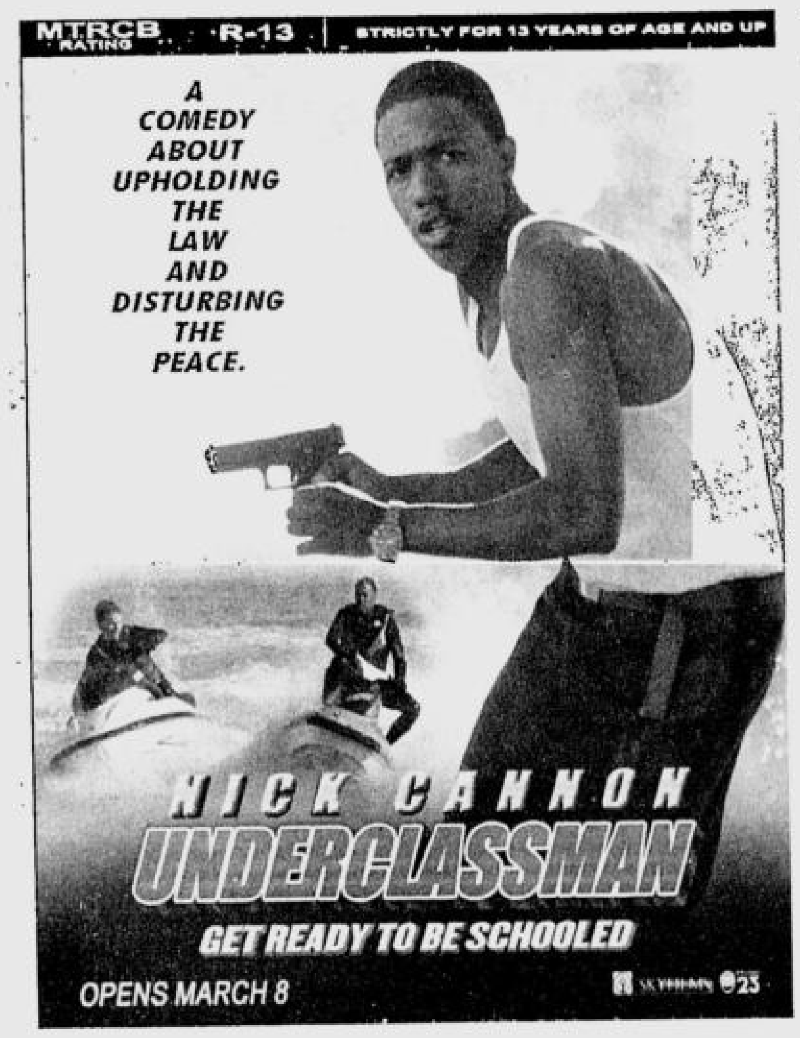
Knightley positively glows on screen, so much so that you are apt to forget that Elizabeth is supposed to conquer with her intelligence and not with her beauty. Still, it is hardly the actress' fault that she is physically blessed!

Aloof

MacFadyen injects his aloof Mr. Darcy with glimpses of passion and—judging by the shrieks from the female audience members in the cinema—does this very effectively. He and Knightley strike all the right sparks with each other, though the script doesn't allow us to see and hear him as often as we should.

This latest adaptation is, certainly, a delight to watch.

MACFADYEN AND KNIGHTLEY. Play Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, respectively, in latest adaptation of Jane Austen's novel.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GET READY TO BE SCHOOLED
OPENS MARCH 8

Film industry needs more government support

By Nestor U. Torre

THE GOVERNMENT PROFESSES to support the Filipino movie industry, but its actions—or, more properly, lack of them—belie its utterances.

A lot has been said and written about this disheartening situation, but the bottom line is, the industry gets little real support because our leaders don't see the true value and power of the film medium.

Priorities

That's why, in the government's order of priorities, movies are among the country's least essential products. Thus, films are regarded in these parts as a luxury industry, which is slapped with the highest taxes.

These onerous taxes, in turn, make producing movies here expensive, so producers don't take risks and play it safe with the same, old plot formats and star combinations. This, in turn, bores viewers to tears, and prompts them to stop watching local movies and patronize US films, instead.

Attitude

So, a lot is riding on the government's attitude regarding our movies. Our leaders should first make it a point to watch Filipino films—both the good and the bad. That way, they'll have a better idea of how to help the industry deal with the grave problems of survival it's currently facing.

Second, our leaders have to convince themselves that social scientists are right: Movies aren't a luxury industry, they're essential and important because they subliminally affect how viewers think and act.

Third, the government should review current laws related to film, retain the truly helpful and throw out those that affect the industry negatively. That means drastically reducing the onerous taxes that have kept local movies from coming into their own for so many decades now.

Values

Fourth, subsidize or otherwise support the production of quality films, which enhance viewers' values.

Fifth, subsidize the efforts of some local producers to penetrate the world market, and thus make moviemaking a dollar-earning industry.

Sixth, set up a film archive to preserve and restore the best Filipino films, because they constitute part of the country's cultural patrimony.

Appreciation

Seventh, train teachers to teach film appreciation in our schools, to raise the standards of local viewers, who would then be more demanding and discriminating, and thus pressure our filmmakers to do better work.

All of these new steps will help Filipino films finally get out of their decade-long slump—and, with them, the country's many viewers, who are sorely in need of better and more inspiring films.

But, first things first, our government leaders have to *truly* see the light in this regard, so that all these beautiful things can happen!

Four actors, 60 roles

From page A3-4

relationships. It is an intoxicating blend of singing, comedy and, of course, romance."

DiPietro is thrilled about the positive reception. "What I'm most happy about is the way audiences have embraced the show," he says.

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" will have matinee performances at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow and on March 12, and evening performances on March 10 and 11 at 8 p.m. Call 887-0710, or Ticketworld at 891-9999.

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Cinema	Screen	Movie	Schedule
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	NASAAN SI FRANCIS	
	2	FEARLESS	
	3	FINAL DESTINATION 3	
	4	CLOSE TO YOU	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	FINAL DESTINATION 3	
	2	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	
	3 THX	PRIDE & PREJUDICE	12 10, 2 45, 5 20, 7 55, 10 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	CAPOTE	
	5	SYRIANA	
	6	FEARLESS	
	7	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	
	2	FEARLESS	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	PRIDE & PREJUDICE	3 10, 5 45, 8 30, 11 20 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	FEARLESS	1:40, 4 00, 6 20, 8 40, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	CAPOTE	2:10, 4 30, 6 50, 9 10, 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	1 00, 3 30, 6 00, 8 30, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 30, 5 30, 8 30, 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
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	2	PRIDE & PREJUDICE	
	3	MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	
	4	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	
	5	FINAL DESTINATION 3	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	FEARLESS	
	2	WALK THE LINE	
	3	PRIME	
	4	CLOSE TO YOU	
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1	FEARLESS	
	2	PRIDE & PREJUDICE	
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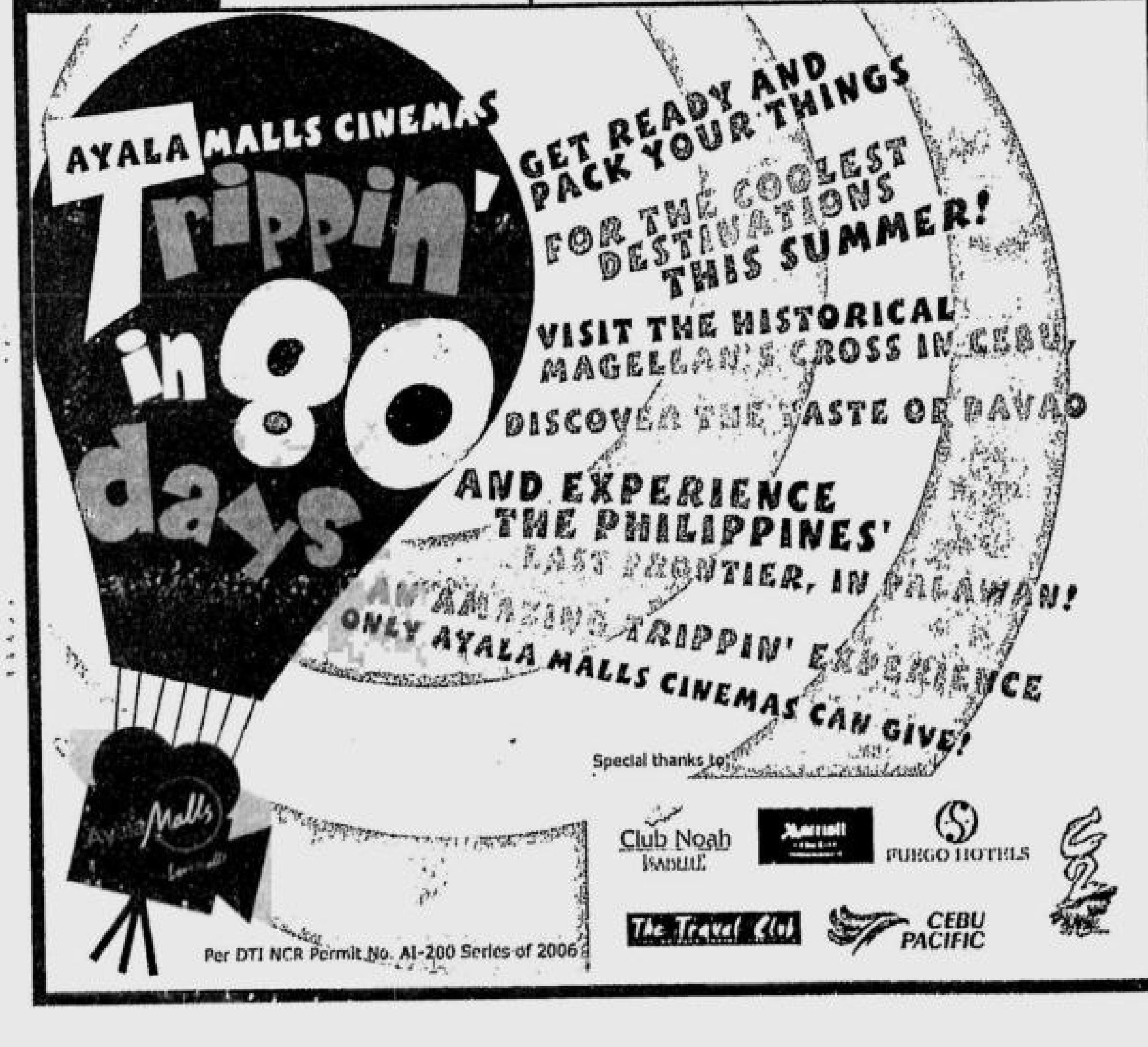

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Second-guessing

From page A3-1

who—aside from Amy Adams' memorable turn in "Junebug"—delivers one of Hollywood's most refreshing, screen-chomping performances in the past cinematic year.

Of the 18 award-giving bodies we polled, 10 chose to go with Reese—including the coveted SAG and the Golden Globes (comedy-musical).

Felicity Huffman ("Transamerica") won at the National Board of Review and the Golden Globes (drama). Keira Knightley ("Pride and Prejudice"), Charlize Theron ("North Country") and Judi Dench ("Mrs. Henderson Presents") round out the Oscar best actress nominees' list.

Coveted

Our choice: Reese Witherspoon, and she *will* hoist that coveted trophy on Oscar night.

After years of outstanding but under-appreciated performances, Philip Seymour Hoffman ("Capote"), is set to get his due. His performance as the revered American writer is a high-wire act that is as entertaining as it is devastating.

It is, however, Heath Ledger ("Brokeback Mountain") who delivers the year's most indelible performance in the best actor category—one that will be remembered long after the dust settles on Hoffman's Oscar trophy.

The best supporting actor prize is a toss between triple-nominee George Clooney ("Syriana"), who's very popular with his peers, and Paul Giamatti ("Cinderella Man"), whose Oscar-worthy performance in 2004's "Sideways" was snubbed by the Academy.

Brave

But, the brave actor who deserves the golden statuette is Jake Gyllenhaal ("Brokeback Mountain").

Other supporting actor nominees: Matt Dillon ("Crash") and William Hurt, who appeared in "A History of Violence" for *only* 10 minutes! (Judi Dench *did* clinch her best supporting actress trophy for eight short minutes of screen time in 1998's "Shakespeare in Love.")

Rachel Weisz ("The Constant Gardener") is expected to bring home the supporting actress trophy, but the actress who deserves the award is Amy Adams for her performance in the little-seen indie, "Junebug."

Tricia...

From page A3-4

Of course, our fond hope is that Tricia will also return to the musical-theater stage, in a suitable production that won't contradict her spiritual convictions.

The last time we saw Tricia, she was with Gigi Posadas, another exceptional and versatile total performer who has opted to lie low of late, and we urged both of them to help energize the musical-theater scene, where they were discovered. Let's hope *that* happens before the year is over!

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THE PODIUM CINEMA
1 FEARLESS
11:30 FS / 11:56 MF / 02:10 / 04:25 06:40 / 08:25 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:50 END
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
12:40 FS / 01:00 MF / 03:35 / 06:10 08:15 LFS / 08:50 LMF / 10:55 END

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 AEON FLUX
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 PINK PANTHER
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
7 FEARLESS
8 CLOSE TO YOU
9 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
10 FIREWALL
11 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
12 SAW 2

SM CITY MANILA
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
4 FEARLESS
5 PINK PANTHER
6 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
7 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 NEW WORLD
11 FIREWALL
12 AEON FLUX

SM MEGACINEMA
1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
12:30FS / 12:55 MF / 03:50 06.45 / 09:10 LFS 09:40 LMF / 12:05 END
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
3 FEARLESS
4 RESERVED
5 PINK PANTHER
6 SYRIANA
7 AEON FLUX
8 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
12 FIREWALL

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 FEARLESS
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 PINK PANTHER
7 AEON FLUX
8 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
9 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
10 FIREWALL

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FEARLESS
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
6 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
7 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
8 AEON FLUX
9 PINK PANTHER
10 RESERVED

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 FEARLESS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FEARLESS
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 FEARLESS
2 AEON FLUX
3 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
4 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
4 FEARLESS
5 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
6 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 FEARLESS
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 WALK THE LINE
4 GOAL

SM CITY SUCAT
1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 FEARLESS
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 FEARLESS
2 WALK THE LINE
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 SAW 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 NASAAN SI FRANCIS
2 SYRIANA
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
5 FEARLESS
6 CLOSE TO YOU
7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
8 AEON FLUX

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 FEARLESS
2 AEON FLUX
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 LITTLE MANHATTAN
6 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY MARILAO
1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 PINK PANTHER
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 AEON FLUX

SM CITY LUCENA
1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 FIREWALL
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 ST. ANGE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
2 NEW WORLD
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FEARLESS

SM CITY MOLINO
1 SYRIANA
2 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 CLOSE TO YOU

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 RESERVED
2 FEARLESS
10:50FS / 11:00 MF / 01:06 03:12 / 05:18 / 07:24 09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:15 END
3 AEON FLUX
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 03:30 / 05:30 / 7:30 09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:05 END
4 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA
5 WALK THE LINE
6 PINK PANTHER
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 FIREWALL

SM CITY ILOILO
1 AEON FLUX
2 RESERVED
3 GOAL
4 WALK THE LINE
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 FIREWALL
7 RESERVED
8 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY DAVAO
1 FEARLESS
2 PRIME
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 BLOODRAYNE
5 WALK THE LINE
6 MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

SM CITY MOLINO
1 FEARLESS
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 MUNICH

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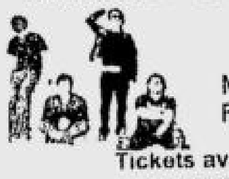
EVENT CALENDAR — SM CENTER Stage — EVENT CALENDAR

1 THE APO EXPERIENCE — MARCH 11, 2006 SATURDAY • 8:30 PM — SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 3



2 MARCH 24, 2006 FRIDAY • 8:30 PM — SM NORTH EDSA CINEMA 1 — hale LIVE IN CONCERT

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GALLERIA 632-9116
1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA • THX
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
2 FEARLESS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 NASAAN SI FRANCIS?
1:40 3:40 5:40 7:40 9:40
8 PINK PANTHER
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
9 AEON FLUX
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
10 CLOSE TO YOU
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 FEARLESS 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
2 CLOSE TO YOU
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 11:40 2:10 4:40
BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 7:30 10:00
7 NASAAN SI FRANCIS?
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8183 • 682-8199
1 CLOSE TO YOU
1:45 4:15 6:45 9:15
2 FEARLESS
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05
3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
11:40 2:40 5:50 9:00
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
5 MURDER
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
6 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05
7 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
12:05 2:55 5:50 9:00
8 NASAAN SI FRANCIS?
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES 936-3231 / 936-3229-30
1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
4 FEARLESS
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2675
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378
1 FEARLESS
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

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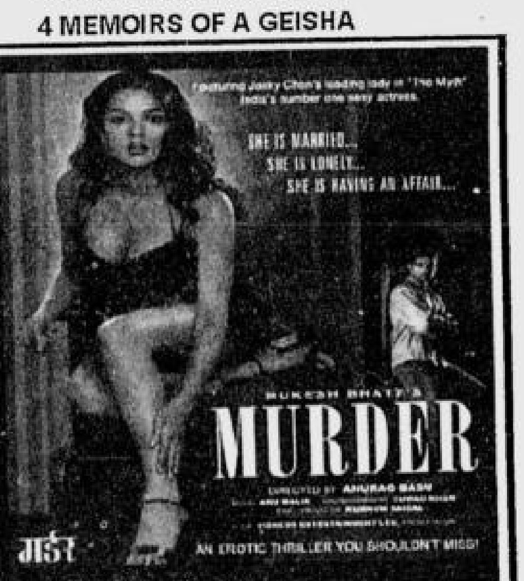
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1 SYRIANA
2 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 NEW WORLD
5 FEARLESS

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1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

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1 FEARLESS
2 WALK THE LINE
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 MURDER
5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

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1 NEW WORLD
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
4 FEARLESS

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1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 MURDER
3 FEARLESS
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

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1 LITLLE MANHATTAN
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
4 BLOODRAYNE
5 FEARLESS
6 AEON FLUX

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 FIREWALL
3 MUNICH
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
4 FIREWALL
5 WALK THE LINE
6 BLOODRAYNE

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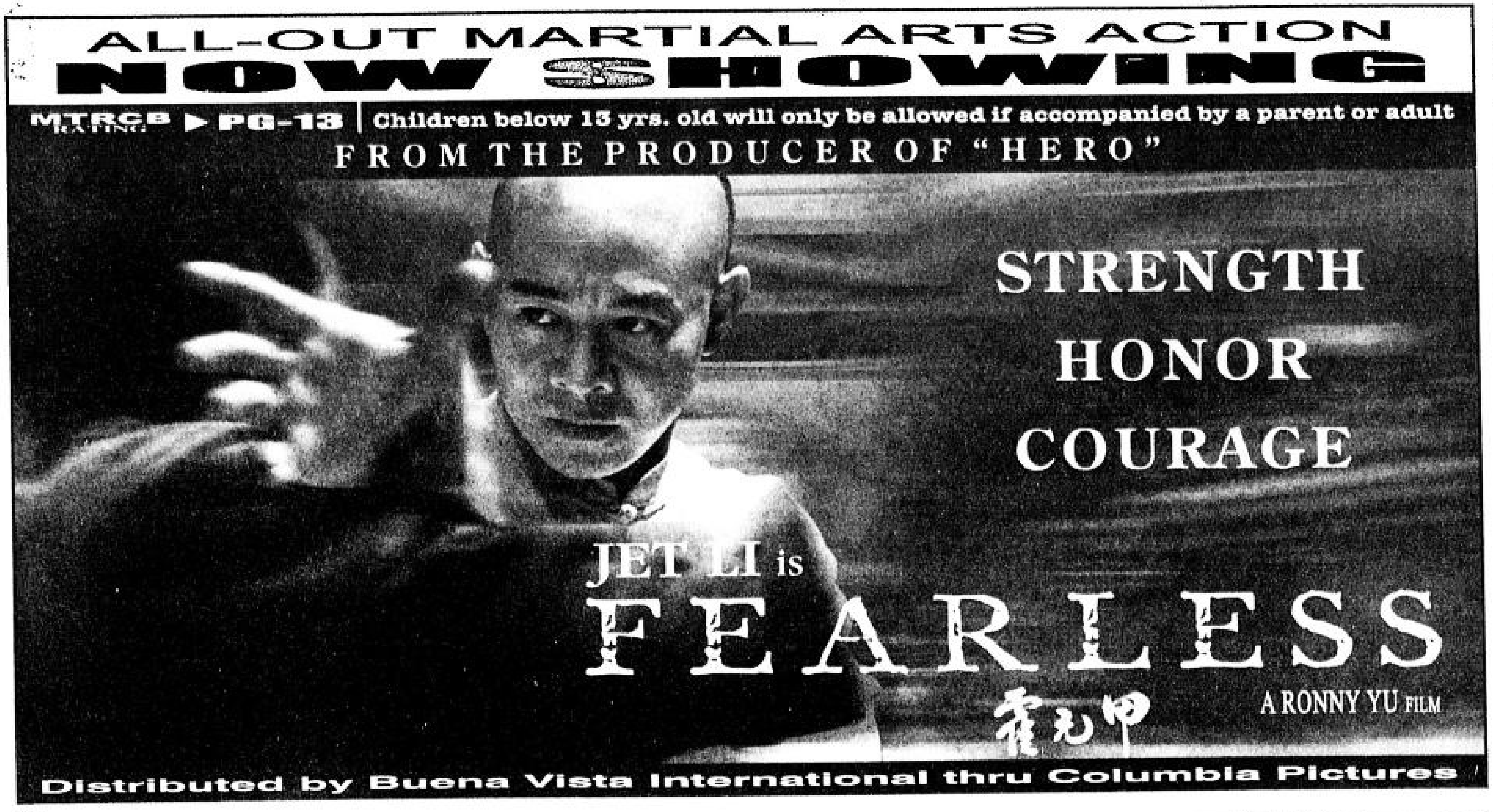

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JIMENEZ. Exceptional versatility.

Tricia returns with two albums

By Nestor U. Torre

TRICIA AMPER JIMENEZ HAS COME OUT with two new albums—"Through the Years," a compilation of "soulful" music in collaboration with other Christian artists like Gary Velenciano and Lito Villareal, and "Tricia Amper Sings Andre Dionisio Songs," interpreting songs like "Ulan," "Kandila" and "Kung Ako'y Maniniwala."

Listening to the albums recently, I found myself flashing back to the '80s, when Tricia Amper auditioned for our hit musical, "Magsimula Ka," at the CCP.

Combination

Tricia *who?* Well, even at the tender age of 14 then, she was a bubbly charmer who bowled us over with her combination of great looks, effervescent personality, disciplined work ethic, spectacular singing ability and exceptional versatility.

If memory serves, I first cast Tricia in an adolescent ingenue role in the musical. Very quickly, though, she showed that she was meant for bigger roles, so she ended up playing the female lead role of Monina!

Tricia was patently too young to play the lead character, who was a college graduate, but her thespic talent enabled her to come off believably in the part.

Much like Hilda Koronel, who was also only 14 when she played young-adult leading ladies in some of Lino Brocka's romantic dramas, Tricia was able to create the illusion of being years older that she really was.

She was versatile enough to play a great range of other roles in the musical—including a wacky housemaid!

Enthusiasm

Audiences were thoroughly taken with this new musical-theater star, and big things were clearly in store for her. Other directors and producers shared our enthusiasm for Tricia—they agreed with us that she came across like a young Maricel Soriano. Clearly, there would be many more roles and productions, not just in theater, for this gem of a discovery.

However, God had other plans for our promising young talent. While she was still in her teens, Tricia opted for domestic bliss and married Butch Jimenez. For years, she focused on their growing family, and on Christian activities.

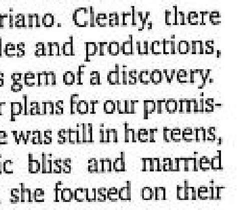
Of late, however, Tricia has become more active again as a performer. Aside from cutting albums, she sings at Christian events and co-hosts "The 700 Club" on TV from time to time.

This is as it should be, because Tricia's God-Given talent shouldn't be kept under wraps, but should be shared with a listening and viewing public in great need of inspirational and values-laden entertainment.

TRICIA/ A3-3

Four actors, 60 roles

By Edmund L. Sicam



BATUCAN. Topbills musical revue.

CURRENTLY ENTERTAINING audiences at the Rep Globe Theater in Makati is Repertory's "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change."

The musical revue directed by Michael Williams stars Cathy Azanza, Liesl Batucan, Robbie Guevara and Nic Manahan—who portray more than 60 roles in a collection of sketches and musical numbers about the joys of dating, romance, marriage, husbands, wives and in-laws.

Sketches

The production started out as a series of sketches without music called "Love Lemmings," Joe DiPietro's first theatrical work. A producer soon asked DiPietro to turn it into a musical revue.

The show premiered as an off-Broadway production in 1996 and was such a hit that it has since surpassed the Broadway runs of "My Fair Lady," "Annie," "South Pacific," "Grease," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Hello, Dolly."

Lovestruck males have used the production to propose to their partners. Forty-nine times, a young man has taken the stage to make a surprise proposal to his sweetheart. In all cases, the brides-to-be happily accepted as the audience roared its approval.

Praises

Theater critics have heaped praises on this production: "This delightful entertaining, charmingly fresh, hopelessly romantic hit is a musical joyride through the jungle of modern

FOUR/ A3-2

BUSINESS

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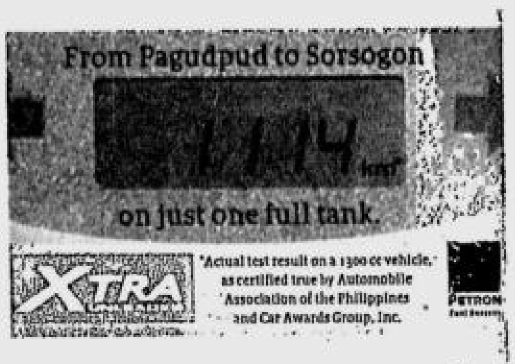
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BIR exceeds January collection goal

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

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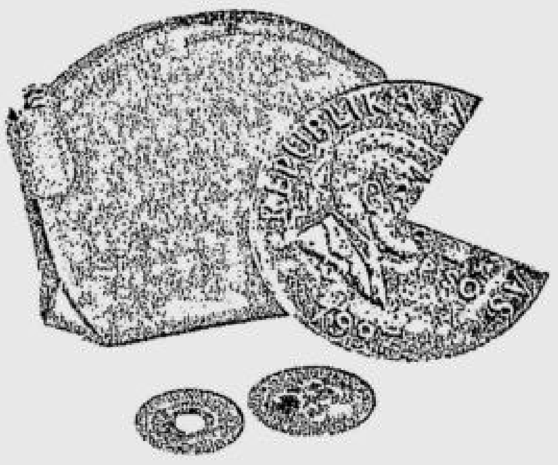
THE VALUE of P1 in 2005 was only P0.77 when compared to its value in 2000.



Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Chona B. Galang, PDI Research

But 2-month performance still short by P3.15B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE COLLECTED MORE THAN what it was tasked to generate in February, aided in part by the increase in the expanded value-added tax.

BIR documents showed that the agency collected P39.23 billion in February, the first month of implementation of the higher VAT. This was slightly higher than its collection goal of P39.18 billion for the month.

The February collection figure was also 24-percent higher than the P31.67 billion it generated in the same month last year.

The VAT was raised to 12 percent from 10 percent effective Feb. 1 in compliance with the VAT Reform Law, considered the most important revenue measure aimed at trimming the Arroyo administration's gaping budget deficit.

The BIR said in a statement that its positive performance in February was also attributed to administrative measures implemented to shore up tax collection. These included the use of third-party sources and industry benchmarks on income to check the accuracy of tax payments, and the enhancement of its computer systems to better detect tax evasion.

The BIR also said a personnel reshuffle, which elicited criticism from some disgruntled employees, helped lift its tax collection performance.

"The recent reshuffling of top officials from the national office down to the regional and district levels has brought positive effects to the collection efforts of the bureau," the BIR said.

BIR/ B5

WHAT'S INSIDE

Farmers' group hits plan to import sugar /B3

ADB clears turnover of Napocor debt /B8

Micro-business forum for military spouses set

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PRESIDENTIAL CONSULTANT for entrepreneurship yesterday said a micro-business exposition and conference would be held March 31 to April 2 for spouses of soldiers and policemen as Malacañang lifted the state of national emergency.

Jose Concepcion III, who heads the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship, said the forum would be held at the Army gymnasium in Fort Bonifacio as part of a range of activities the PCE had lined up for the year.

Concepcion was interviewed at the sidelines of the three-day 4th Philippine Business Fair that kicked off yesterday at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The fair coincides with the Philippine Entrepreneurs Summit 2006, which Image Plus Business Solutions organized with the help of BusinessWorks Inc.

The PCE spearheaded last week's "Go Negosyo" summit and trade show for small and start-up businesses, which was part of a comprehensive advocacy campaign aimed at spurring economic growth by enticing people to put up their own businesses.

Some 50,000 people attended the forum where President Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor a day before she issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1017.

"But the real measure of the summit's success is whether people would take the initiative to muster the discipline and resources to go into business and whether their ventures would succeed," Concepcion said.

Asked whether PP 1017 had countered the PCE's efforts to encourage more business activities, Concepcion said the strengthening of the peso against the dollar showed how confident the businesses were.

"We need to build up confidence and encourage optimism because people are fed up with rallies (and political turmoil)," he said. "We need an entrepreneurial revolution (to push the economy forward)."

Concepcion said the planned micro-business forum was aimed at helping families of soldiers and police officers tap additional sources of livelihood although it would be open to everybody who would want to participate.

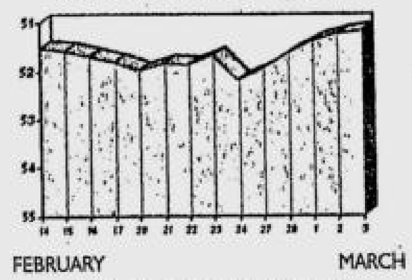
"After that, PCE will hold an agri-business conference in Central Luzon sometime in October," he added.

During the launching of Go Negosyo last month, Concepcion said PCE intended to take up its

MICRO-BUSINESS/ B5

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.18= $1
As of 5 p.m., March 3, 2006

¥ 116.26 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 3, 2006

GOLD: $569.30-569.80
per ounce Hong Kong, March 3, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.34-percent lower yesterday as profit-taking set in after a four-day rally, dealers said.

They said the market was due for a correction after four days of gains, as investors had taken account of President Macapagal-Arroyo's planned lifting of a state of emergency, imposed last week to thwart an alleged coup.

Ms Arroyo formally ended the emergency on Friday shortly before the market's close.

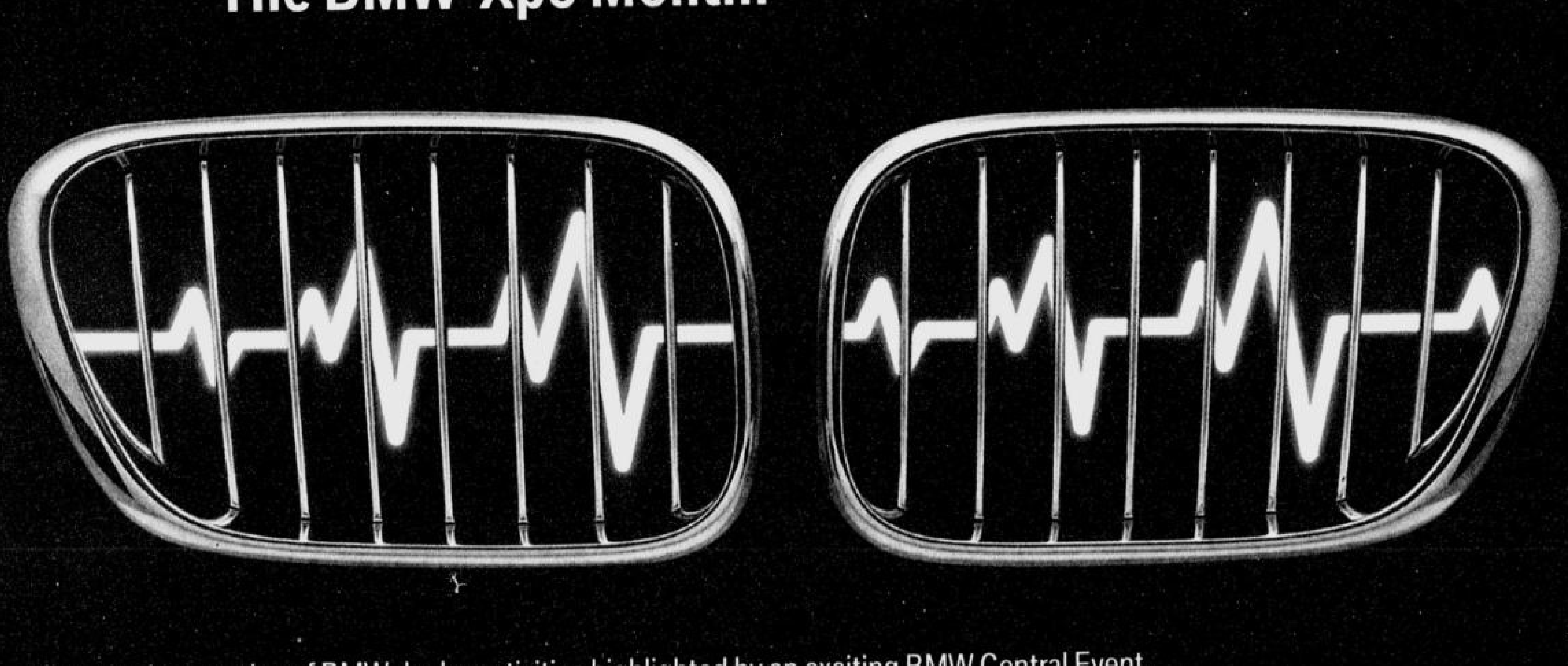
The composite index slipped 7.24 points to 2,130.37 after moving between 2,125.16 and 2,145.96. The all-shares index rose 7.30 points to 1,034.52.

Volume amounted to 1.01 billion shares worth P974.75 million. Gainers beat losers 45 to 39, with 43 stocks unchanged.

"The lifting of the state of emergency should further boost investor confidence as it suggests that the security situation is now stable.

"The market is also convinced that the eco-

SHARES/ B5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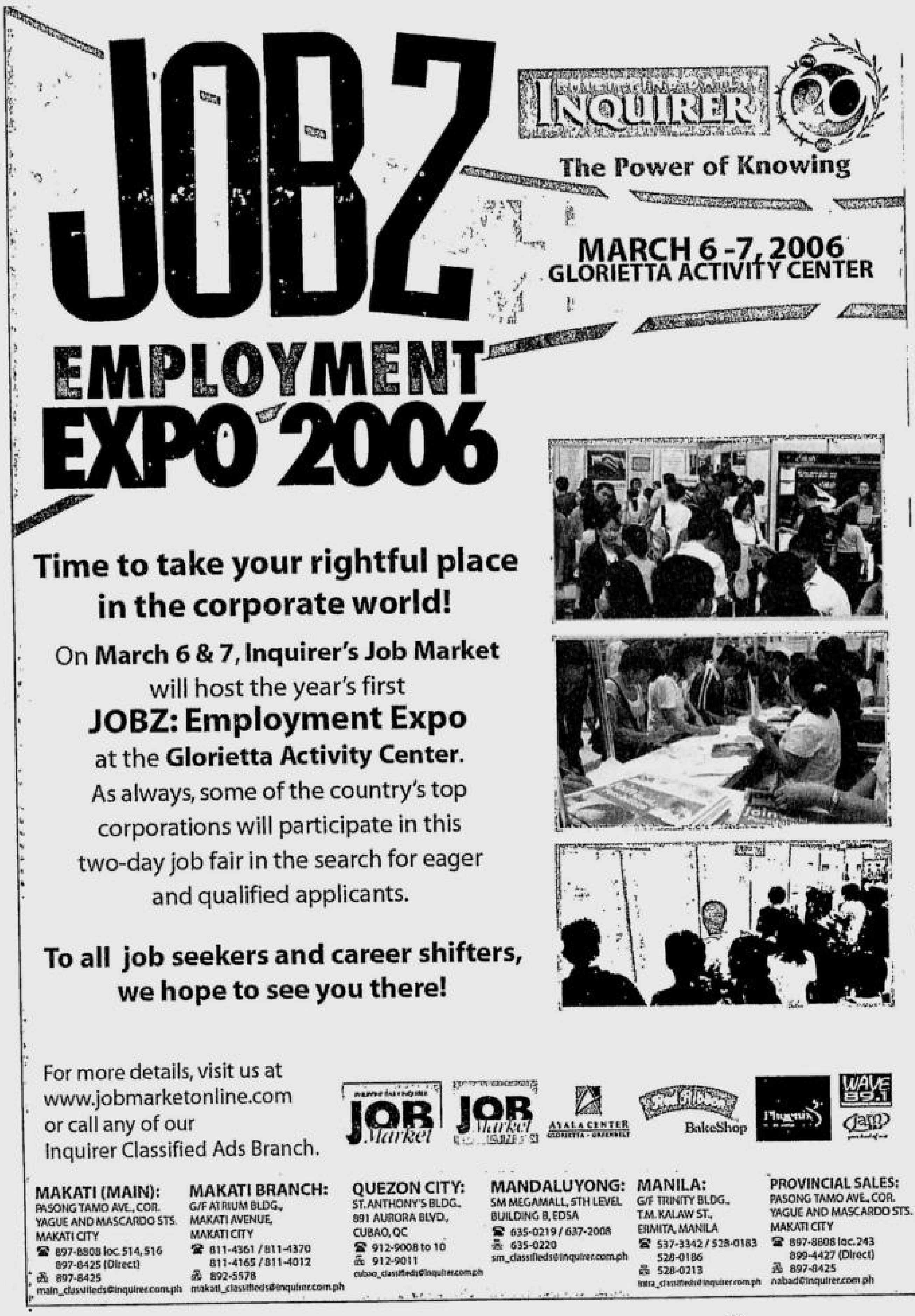

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Give me a brake

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IF YOU CANNOT EXPECT OUR BELOVED SEC to put a brake on the foolishness in Uniwide, maybe it's time for a congressional investigation.

The bargain retail chain Uniwide Sales went bankrupt after its owners borrowed heavily to speculate on real estate.

The company is now under the receivership of the SEC, the Securities and Exchange Commission, which appointed the "managers" in the company

The SEC took control of its operation, primarily to prevent the creditors (i.e. the banks) from pouncing on it and taking away everything.

The idea is for the SEC to relieve the company from its debt burden. Under the SEC receivership, hopefully, Uniwide can recover to repay all the creditors.

Uniwide owes the banks about P3 billion. It also has hundreds of unsecured creditors (i.e. suppliers), owing them some P1.5 billion.

How in the world can this company pay for its debts? The company is about to lease out its seven stores for what could be a "sweetheart deal" price of P4 million a month.

If only the SEC did some elementary mathematics, at such an income, the store rental can pay for Uniwide's debts in about 94 years.

Methinks something is wrong here. Or even criminal!

* * *

WITH the landslide disaster in Leyte came a renewed call for a total logging ban, particularly from some dubious NGOs that solicit "contributions" abroad.

Alright then, where do we get our wood?

The last time I checked, this country uses at least 3 million cubic meters of timber a year. We use it for almost everything—furniture and woodcraft exports, house construction, and even toilet paper.

Here are the sad statistics—we import a million cubic meters a year, we produce locally a million cubic meters—legally, that is, with DENR permits and all—and we allow illegal logging to take care of the remaining one million cubic meters.

That alone means that the government foregoes P800 million a year in revenues from forest charges and all, not to mention the income tax that illegal loggers do not bother paying for.

And do you know what the market price is of those one million cubic meters from illegal logging? It's P3 billion every year. That's why the illegal loggers are highly organized—and heavily armed. They are ready to kill. It's big money.

Now sometime last year, everybody gathered for a bigtime conference on forest management. The ADB even hosted it.

The biggest worry was, how are we going to get lumber supply 20 years from now if we do not manage our forests well. Nobody is investing in forest management, because things are so unstable in the wood sector.

Look, at the drop of some fake eyelashes, the Palace can just suspend logging for political survival. Right, Mike?

Thankfully, the conference yielded a bright idea. And that was, the creation of a "forest management board." It should look at the total package—management, investments, and policies. Everybody loved it, including representatives from the academe, both the civil and the uncivilized society, and even the business sector.

Then DENR chief Michael Defensor promised to work out an "executive order" to create the board.

Defensor has come and gone at the DENR and, several months later, still there is no EO. Do you think he was just pulling our legs or something?

* * *

HERE'S one for the medical tourism books.

A world's first medical procedure was just performed here in the Philippines, at the Computerized Imaging Institute of the Makati Medical Center.

Doctors nicknamed the procedure as "pipeline" embolization, meaning that they put a high-tech "tube" along a blood vessel in your brain to stop the bleeding from a sickness called "aneurysm."

Remember that—the disease that took the life of FPJ?

From what I gathered, some eight years ago, the same institute performed the first "non-surgery" treatment for aneurysm in this country, the one called "coiling."

Of course it helped that the head of the institute is Benjamin Adapon, a doctor who spent years of training in the US as a neuroradiologist, and then came back here as a "balik-scientist."

The good doctor is said to be friends with Peter Nelson, a bigtime neuroradiologist at the New York University Medical Center, who performed the "pipeline" procedure here last January.

I mean, no wonder Nelson chose the Makati Med for the initial clinical trial!

Anyway, the "pipeline" is a device developed by a US company called Chestnut Medical, an invention of a bioengineer by the name of Quang Tran. Yes, he's Asian!

Two Filipino patients got treatment for aneurysm—for FREE. It would have cost $100,000 each. And Makati Med is not even talking about it. Much less advertising it!

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LOT 1 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 500 & 500 = 1,000 sqm. FA: 554sqm.
Lot 282 & 274, 26Th & 27Th Sts., Cor. Calamba St., Brgy. 1
Minimum Bid Price : 3,364,000.00

LOT 2 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 250 sqm. FA: 48sqm.
Lot 12-A Blk 8 Phase V, Mt. Sinai St., Mountainview Subd., Brgy. Mandalagan
Minimum Bid Price : 618,300.00

LOT 3 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 240 sqm. FA: 100sqm.
Lot 13 Blk. 7 C. Jayme Avenue, Brgy. Mansilingan
Minimum Bid Price : 355,000.00

LOT 4 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 227sqm. FA: 92 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 24 No. 24-12 Victoria St., Eroreco Subd., Mandalagan
Minimum Bid Price : 539,200.00

LOT 5 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 216 sqm. FA: 120sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 16 Margarita Ave., Eroreco Subd., Brgy.Mandalagan
Minimum Bid Price : 583,200.00

LOT 6 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 957sqm. FA: 400 sqm.
Lot 699-B San Juan St., Sum-Ag
Minimum Bid Price : 2,425,500.00

LOT 7 - Lot Only
LA: 200sqm.
Lot 8 Blk. 1 Japliana Subd., Purok Sunriser, Brgy.Mandalagan
Minimum Bid Price : 68,000.00

LOT 8 - Lot Only
LA: 933 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk. 8 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd.,Phase 1,Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 2,379,150.00

LOT 9 - Lot Only
LA: 933sqm.
Lot 13 Blk. 8 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd., Phase 1, Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 2,379,150.00

LOT 10 - Lot Only
LA: 851sqm.
Lot 16 Blk 8 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd., Phase 1, Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 1,914,750.00

LOT 11 - Lot Only
LA: 938sqm.
Lot 17 Blk. 8 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd.,Phase 1 Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 2,110,500.00

LOT 12 - Lot Only
LA: 2,479sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 2 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd.,Phase1,Brgy.Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 5,577,750.00

LOT 13 - Lot Only
LA: 2,329sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 2 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd.,Phase1,Brgy.Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 5,240,250.00

LOT 14 - Lot Only
LA: 1,107sqm.
Lot 7 Blk. 39 Sta. Clara Drive, Sta. Clara Subd., Phase 1, Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 2,490,750.00

LOT 15 - Agriland
LA: 1,628sqm.
Lot 1-B Blk 1 Circumferential Road, Sta. Clara Subd., Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 4,884,000.00

LOT 16 - Lot with Makeshift Improvement
LA: 1,310 sqm.
Lot 610, San Roque St Sum-Ag
Minimum Bid Price : 589,500.00

LOT 17 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 8,394 sqm.
Lot 663 Int. Portion Of Purok Kaingin, Brgy Punta Taytay
Minimum Bid Price : 1,511,250.00

LOT 18 - Lot with Makeshift Improvement
LA: 225 sqm.
Lot 15-A, Blk 24, Purok Mahimayaon, Brgy. Bata.
Minimum Bid Price : 160,000.00

LOT 19 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 360 + 360 = 720sqm.
FA: 1,334sqm.
Lot 406-B-26 & 29, 13Th St., Brgy. 4
Minimum Bid Price : 5,453,500.00

LOT 20 - Lot Only
LA: 510sqm.
Lot 10 Blk 1 Alijis Murcia Rd. & 101 St., Greenplains Subd., Singcang
Minimum Bid Price : 969,000.00

LOT 21 - Lot Only
LA: 510sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 1 Alijis Murcia Road & 101 St.,Greenplains Subd.,Singcang
Minimum Bid Price : 969,000.00

LOT 22 - Lot Only
LA: 510sqm.
Lot 26 Blk 1 Alijis Murcia Road & 101 St.,Greenplains Subd.,Singcang
Minimum Bid Price : 1,453,500.00

LOT 23 - Lot Only
LA: 510sqm.
Lot 27 Blk 1 Alijis Murcia Road & 101 St.,Greenplains Subd.,Singcang
Minimum Bid Price : 1,453,500.00

LOT 24 - Lot with fully depreciated Improvement
LA: 1,065sqm.
Lot 31 Alunan Ave., Brgy. 39 Bacolod City
Minimum Bid Price : 3,727,500.00

LOT 25 - Lot with fully depreciated improvement
LA: 1,062sqm.
Lot 43 Osmeña Ave., Brgy. 39 Bacolod City
Minimum Bid Price : 2,230,200.00

LOT 26 - Agriland
LA: 2,243sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 1 Circumferential Road, Sta. Clara Subd., Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 6,280,400.00

LOT 27 - Agriland
LA: 1,937sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 6 Circumferential Road, Sta. Clara Subd., Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 5,423,600.00

LOT 28 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 29 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 30 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 31 - Lot Only.
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 10 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 32 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 33 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 34 - Lot Only
LA: 240sqm.
Lot 16 Blk 26 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 524,400.00

LOT 35 - Lot Only
LA: 760sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 14 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 1,398,400.00

LOT 36 - Lot Only
LA: 760sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 14 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 1,398,400.00

LOT 37 - Lot Only
LA: 760sqm.
Lot 16 Blk 14 San Pedro Ave., Sta. Clara Subd. (West), Brgy. Banago
Minimum Bid Price : 1,398,400.00

LOT 38 - Lot Only
LA: 1,038sqm.
Lot 37 Blk 5 Amelia St., Villa Valderrama Subd., Brgy Bata
Minimum Bid Price : 1,670,900.00

LOT 39 - Lot Only
LA: 1,065sqm.
Lot 38 Blk 5 Amelia St., Villa Valderrama Subd., Brgy. Bata
Minimum Bid Price : 1,715,000.00

LOT 40 - Lot Only
LA: 1,039sqm.
Lot 39 Blk 5 Amelia St., Villa Valderrama Subd., Brgy. Bata
Minimum Bid Price : 1,673,000.00

LOT 41 - Lot Only
LA: 300+300= 600sqm.
Lot 8 & 10, Blk 8, Purok Sampaguita III, Brgy. Singcang-Airport
Minimum Bid Price : 144,000.00

BAGO

LOT 42 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 10,000 sqm. FA: 000 sqm.
Lot 14-A Bago-Ma-Ao Road, Brgy Lag-Asan
Minimum Bid Price : 4,326,500.00

LOT 43 - Lot Only
LA: 300 + 300 + 300 + 301 = 1,201sqm.
Lots 912-B-2-D, 912-B-2-E, 912-B-2-F & 912-B-2-G Sitio Para, Brgy. Taloc
Minimum Bid Price : 180,000.00

LOT 44 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 1,236sqm.
Lot 131 Sitio Limbo, Brgy. Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 36,750.00

LOT 45 - Lot Only
LA: 725sqm.
Lot 216-A-5-H, Purok Balinghoy
Minimum Bid Price : 203,000.00

LOT 46 - Lot Only
LA: 1,000sqm.
Lot 216-A-5-A, Purok Balinghoy
Minimum Bid Price : 320,000.00

BINALBAGAN

LOT 47 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 214,090sqm.
Lot 166 Sina-Itan - Cabite, Biao
Minimum Bid Price : 644,250.00

CADIZ

LOT 48 - Lot Only
LA: 200, 200, 200 = 600 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 4; Lot 3 Blk. 4; Lot 4 Blk. 4 Purok Democracia, Brgy. Jerusalem
Minimum Bid Price : 76,500.00

LOT 49 - Agriland
LA: 251sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 28 Road Lot 27, Andrea Village, Zone II, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 70,000.00

HINOBA-AN

LOT 50 - Lot Only
LA: 2,279sqm.
3954-B-6-B Brgy. 2, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 204,000.00

ILOG

LOT 51 - Lot with Makeshift Improvement
LA: 518sqm.
Lot 2258 Mabini St., Dancalan
Minimum Bid Price : 349,650.00

LOT 52 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA:24,324+15,095+10,120= 49,539sqm.
Lot 670, 1341, 1334 Brgy. Manalad
Minimum Bid Price : 659,300.00

LOT 53 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 87,556sqm.
Lot 1742 Samberal, Brgy. Delicioso
Minimum Bid Price : 893,071.20

LOT 54 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 48,443sqm.
Lot 1446 Bagroy, Brgy. Delicioso
Minimum Bid Price : 552,250.20

KABANKALAN

LOT 55 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 500sqm.
Lot 9 Blk. 7 Granada St., Brgy. 3
Minimum Bid Price : 540,000.00

LOT 56 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 500sqm.
Lot 22 Blk. 7 Sola St., Brgy. 3
Minimum Bid Price : 540,000.00

LOT 57 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 592sqm.
Lot 23 Blk. 7 Sola St., Brgy. 3
Minimum Bid Price : 639,360.00

LOT 58 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 999.50 sqm. FA: 164sqm.
Lot 154-A-2 Burgos St., Brgy. 8
Minimum Bid Price : 904,000.00

LOT 59 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 90,015sqm.
Lot 2955 Candiacop-B,Brgy. Tapi
Minimum Bid Price : 688,500.00

LOT 60 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 157,482sqm.
Lot 2746 Plasanon 1,Brgy Salong
Minimum Bid Price : 1,204,450.00

LA CASTELLANA

LOT 61 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 700sqm. FA: 159sqm.
Lot 635-A Purok Sampaloc, GomezSt.
Minimum Bid Price 633,600.00

MANAPLA

LOT 62 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 410sqm. FA: 86sqm.
Lot 91-B-5-G-1 Int. Gallo St.
Minimum Bid Price : 396,800.00

LOT 63 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 973sqm. FA: 148sqm.
Lot No. 186-F-5 Bangga Tuling, Int. Lacson St.
Minimum Bid Price 584,800.00

LOT 64 - Lot Only
LA: 335sqm.
Lot 91-B-5-E Interior Gallo St.
Minimum Bid Price 142,800.00

SAGAY

LOT 65 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 300sqm. FA: 135sqm.
Lot 19-I-5-A A.E. Maranon St.
Minimum Bid Price 599,400.00

LOT 66 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 201sqm. FA: 70sqm.
Lot 1, Blk 3 Osterhols Sharmbeck Corner Mozart Sts., City Heights Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 279,900.00

LOT 67 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 240sqm. FA: 100sqm.
Lot 10, Blk 46 Tupaz St., Extension, Poblacion 1
Minimum Bid Price : 443,200.00

LOT 68 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 240sqm. FA: 80sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 43 Tupaz St., Aguilar Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 486,400.00

LOT 69 - Agriland
LA: 500sqm.
Lot 14 Purok Lerio, Brgy Vito
Minimum Bid Price : 31,500.00

LOT 70 - Agriland
LA: 500sqm.
Lot 9 Purok Lerio, Brgy. Vito
Minimum Bid Price 31,500.00

SAN CARLOS

LOT 71 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 106,591sqm.
Lot 650; 639 Sitio Nagutman, Brgy. Prosperidad
Minimum Bid Price 96,750.00

SILAY

LOT 72 - Lot Only
LA: 3,211sqm.
Lot 10-F Banana St., Brgy. V
Minimum Bid Price : 1,460,900.00

LOT 73 - Lot Only
LA: 3,210sqm.
Lot 10-E Banana St., Brgy. V
Minimum Bid Price : 1,460,900.00

LOT 74 - Lot Only
LA: 4,024sqm.
Lot 10-G Banana St., Brgy. V
Minimum Bid Price : 1,831,200.00

LOT 75 - Lot Only
LA: 4,023sqm.
Lot 10-H Banana St., Brgy. V
Minimum Bid Price 1,830,500.00

TALISAY

LOT 76 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 180sqm. FA: 42sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 33 Zone 12-A Carmela Valley Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 555,300.00

LOT 77 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 180sqm. FA: 151sqm.
Lot 9 Blk 6 Sta Lucia St., Carmela Valley Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 878,250.00

LOT 78 - Lot Only (Improvement not worth appraising)
LA: 180sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 33 Zone 12-A Carmela Valley Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 243,000.00

TOBOSO

LOT 79 - Lot Only
LA: 297sqm.
Lot 6 Blk. 4 Road Lot 2 Dumdum Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 62,900.00

LOT 80 - VACANT LOT; AGRILAND
LA: 10,275sqm.
Lot 1819 Sitio San Roque, Brgy. Salamanca
Minimum Bid Price : 42,750.00

LOT 81 - Lot Only
LA: 329sqm.
Lot 2, Blk 6, Dumdum Subd., Brgy. Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 52,800.00

VALLADOLID

LOT 82 - Lot with Makeshift Improvement
LA: 108,725sqm.
Lot 1358-G-2-F & 1358-G-2-A Brgy Palaka
Minimum Bid Price : 1,772,000.00

VICTORIAS

LOT 83 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 300sqm. FA: 91sqm.
Lot 7 Blk 10 Urdaneta St., Salvacion Subd.
Minimum Bid Price : 338,400.00

LOT 84 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 285sqm. FA: 155sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 18 Cor. Mabolo-Doña Aurora Sts. Brgy. Villamonte, Bacolod City
Minimum Bid Price : 828,000.00

LOT 85 - Lot with Improvement
LA: 1,448sqm. FA: 620sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 32 # 553 Camagong St., Brgy. Villamonte, Bacolod City
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SMC reports P9.1-B profit for 2005

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. POSTED A SLIGHT 3-percent increase in profit in 2005 to P9.15 billion from a restated net income of P8.86 billion in 2004, as the food and beverage giant continued to reel from high financing charges due to its aggressive expansion overseas.

Financing charges and one-time expenses due to its acquisition of Australian dairy National Foods, its largest acquisition last year, hit P6.9 billion in 2005 compared with P2.1 billion in 2004.

Excluding these one-offs, net income would have increased by 10 percent, San Miguel said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday.

San Miguel's full year net income, however, surpassed projections of stock market analysts who expected it to post a decline in net income to between P7.3 to P7.8 billion, an INQUIRER poll earlier showed.

Contributions from its newly acquired international businesses also kicked in last year as San Miguel reported a 30-percent increase in its consolidated revenues to P227 billion.

This was largely boosted by the consolidation of National Foods, which SMC acquired last year for roughly $1 billion.

Operating income remained unchanged at P17.5 billion despite raw material cost increases and one-time packaging costs incurred for Gran Matador and Coke "Sakto."

The operating income also reflected a restructuring charge at beverage unit Coca Cola and hard liquor arm Ginebra San Miguel totaling P972 million.

These costs weighed down on the profitability of San Miguel's soft drink and hard liquor operations, San Miguel chief finance officer Ferdinand Constantino wrote in a report to investors yesterday.

Constantino also explained that excise taxes also dragged volumes of San Miguel's hard liquor unit Ginebra San Miguel, adversely affecting affordability.

"Looking beyond these results, I think it is important to stress that we were prepared to forego on short-term profitability because we believe we've made the right choices in terms of strengthening our position to deliver longer-term growth across our core businesses and set the agenda in our industry—both in the Philippines and in the region," Constantino told investors.

Farmers' group hits plan to import sugar

Zesto maker asked to support local industry

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF SUGARCANE FARMERS HAS opposed plans of a cola and fruit juice drink manufacturer to import sugar despite the spike in sugar prices in the world market.

In a letter to Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila dated March 1, the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. said Asiawide Refreshment Corp.'s plan to import sugar was puzzling considering imports were more expensive.

Asiawide Refreshment, maker of RC Cola and the Zesto line of drinks, had proposed to import some 100,000 metric tons of sugar, which Favila has said "could be beneficial to consumers."

Company officials had said domestic prices have increased to more than P40 a kilo from only P31 in November.

The officials felt importation could help bring down local prices considering, like when the government announced it was importing 50,000 MT to correct the prices.

Asiawide Refreshment said the announcement apparently served its purpose.

The price of refined sugar went down to P1,650 a 50-kilogram bag from P1,820 in early February, while that of brown sugar went down to P1,300 a bag from P1,420.

NFSP president Enrique D. Rojas said it was "frustrating" that Asiawide Refreshment did not sympathize with local sugarcane farmers.

"For a long time, the price of domestic sugar failed to catch up with inflation despite the spiraling cost of production," Rojas said.

"The exorbitant cost of fertilizer, fuel, spare parts and even labor made us lose money in the past years," he added. "It is only now that sugar prices have increased at a level that allows ...(us) to pay the debts that we incurred."

He said imports were still more expensive since the landed price of importing sugar, if it came from Southeast Asia, was about P1,655 a bag plus a refining cost of P450, as well as duties and value added tax.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

P21M for Semirara cleanup

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. has already used up P21 million of its P90-million budget for cleaning up parts of Semirara Island affected by an oil spill. The rocky and sandy beach, as well as 40 hectares of mangroves on the island, have already been cleared of oil and debris. On Dec. 18, a Napocor power barge ran aground on the island and ruptured its fuel tanks, spilling around 210,000 liters of oil and contaminating over 600 meters of the Semirara shoreline and more than 100 hectares of mangroves. "We are doing everything that we can to expedite the cleanup," Napocor said. "This is the first phase of our total package in mitigating the effects of the oil spill. The second phase, which we want to implement immediately, is to rehabilitate the mangrove areas and provide livelihood assistance for the residents of affected communities." *Abigail L. Ho*

ERC drafts new guidelines

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has drafted a set of guidelines that will not only encourage competition in the power sector, but also shield against anti-competitive and discriminatory behavior. According to the regulatory body, its Competition Rules and Complaint Procedures is up for final comments by industry stakeholders. The ERC said that the set of rules would also "ensure and promote competition, encourage market development and customer choice, discourage and penalize anti-competitive or discriminatory behavior." The rules likewise aim to prevent abuse of market power to protect public interest. Earlier, the ERC issued guidelines governing the limits on the control and ownership of generating capacity within grids and nationwide.

Abigail L. Ho

Israel firm buys into IT park

ISRAEL-BASED conglomerate Africa Israel Investments Ltd. will acquire 465.37 million shares of Cyberzone Properties Inc. (CPI) for P538 million, effectively diluting Filinvest Development Corp.'s (FDC) ownership of the information technology park developer from 90 percent to 54 percent.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said the infusion from Africa Israel would enable CPI to hasten the construction of more IT-based buildings to meet the rising demand.

"The growing ability of CPI to meet such demands helps establish a niche for FDC and the Filinvest group of companies in general in the area of IT park and (economic zone) development, and widens the range of real estate products that they could reliably offer to the general public," the company said.

Under their investment agreement, Africa Israel will pay P538 million in cash, or P1.156 a share, within a 24-month period.

CPI said it would use Africa Israel's investment to bankroll the construction of additional buildings within the Northgate Cyberzone IT park in Alabang, as well as fund its other working capital requirements. *Abigail L. Ho*

Paxys buys stake in firm

Publicly-listed call center firm Paxys Inc. has acquired a 15.8-percent stake in software maker Global Idealogy Corp (GIC) for P10.4 million, and will acquire more shares of the company in the future.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Paxys said it would inject P7.5 million in GIC by subscribing to 3.33 million new common shares.

The new money will be used to finance the software company's expansion around the region as well as fund its plan to diversify its product line.

The subscription will also increase Paxys' stake in GIC to 23.8 percent.

"Subsequently, Paxys intends to acquire a majority ownership stake of 51 percent in GIC within the first half of 2006 through a follow-up transaction involving the purchase of an additional tranche of common shares and warrants, and through a subscription of new common shares," Paxys said in its disclosure.

Locally-incorporated GIC sells software applications for corporate clients based on "mobile and other emerging technologies" *Daxim L. Lucas*

NOTICE OF MERGER

Notice is hereby given that the Articles and Plan of Merger pertaining to the merger of ROHM ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES, INC., (hereinafter referred to as "REPI"), as the surviving corporation, and ROHM APOLLO SEMICONDUCTORS PHILIPPINES, INC. (hereinafter referred to as "RASPI"), as the absorbed corporation, both corporations organized under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines, have been approved in separate meetings held on 15 February 2006 and which were duly called for the purpose by the majority vote of their respective Board of Directors and by the vote of the entire outstanding capital stock of both REPI and RASPI.

Notice is likewise hereby given that said Articles and Plan of Merger between REPI and RASPI will be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission SEC. Upon the effectivity of the merger as approved by the SEC, the merged entities shall continue under the name ROHM ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES, INC.

This announcement shall serve as notice to all parties concerned of the legal effects of the Plan of Merger between REPI and RASPI and the legal dissolution of the absorbed corporation.

HIROYUKI OTA (Sgd.)
Vice President
Rohm Electronics Philippines, Inc.

NOBUYUKI SAKAMOTO (Sgd.)
Vice President
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Aveo 1.5 M/T	570,000	59,000	45,495	31,175	24,175	17,204	13,782	12,009	6,831
Aveo 1.5 A/T	610,000	69,000	48,166	33,005	25,595	18,214	14,592	12,715	7,310
Optra 1.6 L M/T	650,000	89,000	49,946	34,225	26,541	18,888	15,131	13,185	7,790
Optra 1.6 L A/T	696,000	89,000	54,042	37,032	28,717	20,436	16,372	14,266	8,341
Optra 1.6 LS M/T	724,000	89,000	56,535	38,740	30,042	21,379	17,127	14,924	8,676
Optra 1.6 LS A/T	770,000	89,000	60,630	41,546	32,218	22,928	18,367	16,005	9,228

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Effectiveness of 'good,' 'bad' carb diet doubted

DIETS THAT DISTINGUISH between "good carbs" and "bad carbs" are not an effective way of controlling blood sugar levels, a new study suggests.

Although made popular by the South Beach Diet and others, the glycemic index has never been fully embraced by most dietitians and remains a point of debate among scientists.

Now, diabetes researcher Elizabeth Mayer-Davis of the University of South Carolina says the use of the index should be ended altogether in favor of more traditional methods of losing weight and reducing the risk of diabetes: eating less and exercising more.

"The glycemic index is sufficiently flawed as an index that it is not helpful for scientists or people trying to create a healthy diet," Mayer-Davis said.

100-pt scale

The glycemic index is a 100-point scale, with white bread at 100 points, that measures how quickly carbohydrates enter the bloodstream as sugar.

According to index supporters, people should avoid high-glycemic foods such as white bread and potatoes because they will quickly raise a person's blood-sugar level. On the other hand, low-glycemic foods such as carrots and apples are absorbed more slowly, making a person feel full longer and reducing cravings, which helps with weight loss.

Promoters of the diet also say that eating low-glycemic foods will result in less fluctuation in their blood sugar levels.

Both the Atkins and South Beach diets have raised interest in the theory.

A mistake

Beth Kunkel, a professor of food science and human nutrition at Clemson University and president of the South Carolina Dietetic Association, said that while there is debate among dietitians about its validity, it would be a mistake to reject the concept altogether.

"To just reject it out of hand and quit working on it would be a mistake," Kunkel said. "I just think we're five to 10 years away from really understanding it from a research viewpoint."

Previous studies have shown conflicting results. One small study showed that people on a low-glycemic diet were less hungry later in the day than a group fed a high-glycemic diet. Another study, involving 39 overweight people, showed that those on a low-glycemic diet lowered their risk of heart disease. Both studies were conducted by Dr. David Ludwig of Boston's Children's Hospital.

However, American Heart Association officials have disputed the significance of those findings.

1,000 participants

The new study, published in the February issue of the British Journal of Nutrition, relied on food questionnaires from more than 1,000 people over five years and assessed their consumption of high- and low-glycemic foods. Researchers tested their blood sugar levels twice during the study period and found no significant correlation between the glycemic index of foods and the blood-sugar levels of participants.

Mayer-Davis said researchers should develop a new measure of how different carbohydrates can affect health. She said a better index would be based on the physical characteristics of foods, such as fat content and calories, because numerous factors influence a food's effect on blood-sugar levels. *AP*

Want to live longer? Think positive

MEN WITH A BRIGHT OUTLOOK ON LIFE seem to be less likely to die of heart disease or stroke than their more pessimistic peers, Dutch researchers report.

The findings, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, add to evidence that natural optimists may be a hardier breed.

In an earlier study, the same researchers found a lower risk of death from any cause within a given timeframe among older adults who had generally optimistic attitudes.

The new study followed 545 men between the ages of 64 and 84 for up to 15 years. It found that those who were judged to be optimists at the outset, based on a four-item questionnaire, were about half as likely to die of cardiovascular disease during followup as men who were more pessimistic by nature.

To assess optimism, the participants were asked to say whether they agreed fully, partially, or not at all with four statements: "I still expect much from life," "I do not look forward to what lies ahead for me in the years to come," "My days seem to be passing by slowly," and "I am still full of plans."

More exercise

Optimistic men tended to exercise more and give higher ratings to their overall health, but that explained only a small part of the association, said Dr. Erik J. Giltay, the study's lead author.

It's likely that optimism affects cardiovascular health in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly, according to Giltay, a researcher at the GGZ Delfland Institute of Mental Health in the Netherlands.

Men in the study completed the questionnaire gauging "dispositional optimism" at three different times during the 15-year followup.

Overall, those men who were optimists in 1985, during the first test, were 55 percent less likely to die of heart disease or stroke by 2000. That was with other major factors—like general health, smoking and family history of cardiovascular disease—taken into account.

Depression

The link wasn't explained by optimists' lower rates of depression, a disorder that may raise the odds of cardiovascular disease.

So the "intriguing question," according to the researchers, is why optimism is associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular death.

One possibility, Giltay said, is that optimists are betting at coping with adversity, and may, for example, take better care of themselves when they do fall ill. Other studies, he said, have found that optimists seem to be better at coping with hardships such as illness or loss of a loved one.

On the other hand, the researchers note in the report, there may be a role for biological "consequences or predecessors" of pessimism.

For instance, Giltay explained, certain genetic factors may underlie both heart health and a person's tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic.

In addition, a person's disposition may affect health through its influence on the nervous, immune and hormonal systems.

Personality traits tend to be stable over a lifetime, Giltay noted, so pessimism is likely to be a tough risk factor to change. So it's a good idea, he said, for older adults, especially those with a less-sunny disposition, to focus on heart risks they can alter, like smoking and inactivity. *Reuters*

Olympiad winners, Gödel, math trick

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

IN THE ATENEO MATH Olympiad, aside from the grueling three-hour individual round, the contestants also competed in a more traditional competition where they needed to answer questions quickly, and for one challenge problem, to explain how they went about their solutions.

Elementary level first place winners were Wyeth Sy (St. Stephen's Grade School), Vance Eldric Go (St. Jude), Joseph Ramos and Damian Dailisan (Ateneo). Second placers were Aldric Cristoval Reyes (Chiang Kai Shek College), Khrizen Angeles, Miguel Oabel and Daniel Tan (Ateneo).

Third placers were Geraldine Baniqued (St. Paul's Pasig), Roland Lloyd Salita, Joseph Pizarro and Juan Senga (Ateneo). Judges were professors from the college: Dr. Jose Marasigan, Dr. Flor Francisco, Dr. Reginaldo Marcelo and Dr. Emmanuel Cabral.

High school winners

High school first place winners were Paul Julian Hao (Chiang Kai Shek), Patrick Ong (St. Jude Catholic School), Joanna Tan (Jubilee Christian Academy), Victor Lorenz Ng and Emmanuel Plan (Ateneo).

Second placers were Carlo Adajar (PAREF Southridge), Vance Mikhail Uy (St. Jude), Edmund Soriano and Alvin Belleza (Ateneo), Davin Choi (Chiang Kai Shek), Ramon Marfil (Philippine Science High School), and Mikhael Fiorello Llado, Miguel Alexander Ty and Gabriel Eduardo Villareal (Ateneo).

Third placers were Emerson Escolar (Grace Christian High School), Nellie Chua (St. Jude), Diogo Moitinho de Almeida and Ernesto Macatangay (Ateneo). Judges were Dr. Marasigan, Dr. Jumela Sarmiento, Mida Guillermo and Debbie Bautista.

Stored energy

Last year, I wrote about math (specifically, Gödel's Theorem) in relation to the "Matrix" movie trilogy, which prompted responses from readers. De La Salle University-Manila Engineering associate professor Raymond Tan [natdnomyar@yahoo.com] writes:

"Congratulations on a very interesting column; I find the discussion on Gödel's theorem intriguing. I just thought I'd give you some inputs on 'The Matrix' trilogy from the standpoint of my research (sorry, not Gödel but physics) since it has been bothering me for the last five years.

"Fans of the movie will recall that it was the humans who destroyed the atmosphere in an attempt to make solar energy inaccessible to the machines. It was this very act that led machines to eventually use humans as batteries. This premise is untenable from a thermodynamic perspective.

Humans (and most other organisms, for that matter) do not generate energy internally, but draw on energy in food. This energy when viewed from a system-level or life cycle perspective is in turn derived from solar energy. Hence the very notion of bioenergy being used as a substitute for solar power is erroneous. The calories in our food are nothing but stored solar energy."

Those who want to know more about Godel's theorem (without going through the math) can look at this suggestion from my student Miguel Paraz [mparaz@gmail.com]:

"Since I never took up the mathematical aspects of computer science in school, I first came across Gödel in the book 'The Universal Computer: The Road from Leibniz to Turing' by Martin Davis. It places the figures in computer science theory in narrative form, and is highly recommended for programmer types who are not math people."

Puzzle

A reader gives us this puzzle. Try it out, it's fun!

1. Key in the first three digits of your seven-digit phone number into the calculator.

(Note: Do not key in the area code, but the three digits after.)

2. Multiply by 80.
3. Add 1.
4. Multiply by 250.
5. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number.
6. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number again.
7. Subtract 250.
8. Divide by 2.

What appears on the calculator is your seven-digit phone number. Neat, huh?

Why does it work? Think of algebra. The best solution will be published in this column.

E-mail blessbook@yahoo.com.

ASK THE DENTIST
Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Yellow teeth

WHAT TOOTHPASTE WOULD you recommend for yellow teeth?—Jessica B.

There are a lot of toothpastes out there that have whitening ingredients. Are they safe? I personally would use them with caution and at the most maybe two weeks and then see if there is an improvement. The ingredients could be too abrasive or too acidic. Teeth should not be constantly exposed or treated with acids or abrasives because you might wear out the enamel.

If you are still concerned about your yellow teeth, visit your dentist and you can try bleaching your teeth. But I also caution against bleaching for a long time for the same reasons.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

Phytochemicals and dietary fibers

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH Institute (FNRI) has always been at the forefront in educating the public on functional foods that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition.

The FNRI encourages us to eat sufficient amounts of foods rich in phytochemicals. Phyto is the Greek word for plant, and phytochemicals are natural bioactive compounds found in plant foods that work with other essential nutrients and dietary fiber.

Phytochemicals contain protective, disease-preventing compounds. More than 900 different phytochemicals have been identified as components of food, and many more continue to be discovered today.

It is estimated that there may be more than 100 different phytochemicals in just one serving of vegetables.

Bright-colored veggies

Fruits and vegetables with bright colors—yellow, orange, red, green, blue and purple—generally contain high amounts of phytochemicals and nutrients.

Lycopene is a phytochemical found in tomato and pink grapefruit. Betacarotene is a pigment found in squash, carrots and green leafy vegetables. Isoestrogens are found in soy products.

Although phytochemicals are not yet classified as essential nutrients—substances necessary for sustaining life—they have been identified as containing properties for aiding in disease prevention. Phytochemicals are associated with the prevention and/or treatment of at least four of the leading causes of deaths: cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

Cancer prevention

Since 25 years ago, the US National Cancer Institute Chemoprevention Program began evaluating phytochemicals for efficacy and applicability for preventing and treating diseases. The American Cancer Society recognizes also the health benefits of phytochemicals and has included the following in their guidelines for nutrition and cancer prevention.

- Choose most of the foods you eat from plant sources.
- Limit your intake of high-fat foods, particularly from animal sources.
- Be physically active. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages if you drink at all.

Fiber, too

Fruits and vegetables are also rich in dietary fibers, the part of food that resists digestion.

Fiber provides roughage, which helps prevent constipation, intestinal disorders and cancer. Fibers are found only in plant foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, seeds and nuts. Rich sources of insoluble dietary fiber are bran (the outer covering of corn, oat, rice and wheat), whole grains (corn, rice, oat, and other cereals) and edible skins of fruits and vegetables.

Some fibers may be soluble and they help reduce blood cholesterol and aid in better nutrient absorption. Rich sources of soluble dietary fibers are oats, dry beans and legumes, apples, oranges, peaches, grapes, carrots, cabbage, okra, prunes, citrus fruits, and flour made from coconut residue (*sapal*).

A diet rich in phytochemicals and fibers can help maintain good health and save us a lot of money in medical bills.

Strategies

These simple strategies may help increase our dietary fruits, vegetables, and grains:

- Keep fruits and vegetables stocked and in sight.
- Reach for juice instead of coffee or soda.
- Add chopped fruits to cereal, yogurt, pancakes, muffins, or even a milkshake.
- Snack on fresh chopped carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and pepper.
- Add fresh greens, carrots, celery, parsley, tomatoes, and/or beans to your soups.

The FNRI has developed and standardized easy-to-do recipes using rich sources of phytochemicals and dietary fibers.

You may call the FNRI at 837-2934, 837-3164, e-mail mvc@fnri.dost.gov. ph, or visit the website www.fnri.dost.gov.ph.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 3, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	35	34	35	798,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59.5	59.5	59	59	1,720,200
China Banking Corp.	660	660	655	655	690
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.47	6,580,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	65	65	64	64.5	97,900
International Exch. Bank	25.5	25.5	25	25	12,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35	35.5	34	34	2,886,100
Philippine National Bank	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	3,000
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	1,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	100
Security Bank Corp.	38	38	38	38	2,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	35	35.5	34.5	35.5	59,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	850,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	147	149	147	149	16,450
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2200	2210	2200	2210	580
Ivantage Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.8	0.8	7,710,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	45	45	44.5	44.5	314,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42.5	44	42.5	43.5	842,500
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	12.75	12.75	65,200
Manila Electric Co. B	19.25	19.5	19	19.25	798,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.4	3,520,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	9,526,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	360,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.6	3.55	3.6	44,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.5	20.5	19.75	19.75	43,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35	36	35	36	107,700
RFM Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	70,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61.5	62	61	61.5	55,400
San Miguel Corp. B	84	84.5	83.5	83.5	164,800
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18.25	1,085,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	530,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	1,960,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.24	1.26	1,638,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	2,724,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	3,000,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	200,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.43	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	345	350	345	345	198,970
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	470,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	312,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.42	2.44	2.42	2.44	2,055,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	210,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89	870,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	12,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.97	2,780,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.05	3.05	47,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.94	2.08	1.94	2.06	6,546,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	50,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	746,000
Medco Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	3,060,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	200,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	12,200,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.235	2,400,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.51	870,000
SM Investments Corp.	226	226	223	224	103,250
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.115	0.12	1,710,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11	7,162,600
Belle Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	390,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.76	1,226,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	91,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.22	7,770,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	8,570,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	180,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.22	1.26	1.2	1.22	1,952,000
Interport Res.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	5,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	5,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	270,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	1,360,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.5	1.4	1.44	29,752,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.34	3,890,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.33	0.34	6,010,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.8	34,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	1,070,000
SM Development Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.42	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.8	7.9	3,004,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	900,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	18,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.88	850,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	845	880	845	855	21,110
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.25	4,786,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1810	1840	1805	1825	45,790
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	3,400,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	7,100,000
Ionics Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	100,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.05	9,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	60,000
Philweb Corp.	0.026	0.027	0.025	0.026	254,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	7,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	937,800
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.98	0.99	0.97	0.99	370,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.76	1.74	1.74	2,058,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	1,140,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.15	38,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.9	8.3	7.9	8.2	4,725,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.22	1.22	1.12	1.14	378,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	52,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.9	3,306,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	70,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	4,580,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,540,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	216,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	4,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.006	225,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.7	8,423,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.86	1.9	1.84	1.84	8,538,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	13,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	240,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.235	0.24	5,870,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	14,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	190,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	120,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.85	3.95	51,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.75	69,300

CURRENCIES

March 3, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.830358	1.000000	51.2600
Japan	Yen	0.007170	0.008635	0.4426
United Kingdom	Pound	1.457112	1.754800	89.9510
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107041	0.128909	6.6079
Switzerland	Franc	0.639770	0.770475	39.4945
Canada	Dollar	0.733986	0.883939	45.3107
Singapore	Dollar	0.514599	0.619732	31.7675
Australia	Dollar	0.619716	0.746324	38.2566
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.203418	2.653576	136.0223
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221429	0.266667	13.6694
Brunei	Dollar	0.513010	0.617818	31.6694
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000109	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021495	0.025887	1.3270
UAE	Dirham	0.226083	0.272272	13.9567
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.204300	61.7324
Argentina	Peso	0.271138	0.326531	16.7380
Brazil	Real	0.393367	0.473732	24.2835
Denmark	Kroner	0.134013	0.161392	8.2730
India	Rupee	0.018795	0.022635	1.1603
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224027	0.269796	13.8297
Mexico	New Peso	0.078882	0.094998	4.8696
New Zealand	Dollar	0.553092	0.666089	34.1437
Norway	Kroner	0.124478	0.149909	7.6843
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013885	0.016722	0.8572
South Africa	Rand	0.136051	0.163846	8.3987
Korea	Won	0.000857	0.001032	0.0529
Sweden	Kroner	0.105801	0.127416	6.5313
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025708	0.030960	1.5870

BIR exceeds . . .

From page B1

The BIR's collection surplus in February followed a disappointing performance in January and for the whole of 2005. The BIR, the government's main source of income, registered a shortfall of P12.4 billion based on its full-year target of P546.9 billion.

Although it registered a collection surplus in February, it was not enough to compensate for the huge gap it posted in January and was therefore below its target on a cumulative basis.

The BIR collected only P49.81 billion in January, or about P3 billion lower than its P53-billion target.

For the first two months of the year, BIR collections stood at P89.03 billion compared with its goal of P92.18 billion.

Atlas to list subsidiary on PSE

Mining firm to use proceeds to reopen Toledo mine in Cebu

By Christine A. Gaylican

ATLAS CONSOLIDATED MINING AND DEVELopment Corp. plans to list shares of its subsidiary, Carmen Copper Corp., on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Atlas chief finance officer Martin C. Buckingham said proceeds from the listing would be used to partly finance the operation of its Toledo copper mine in Cebu City, run by Carmen.

Reopening the mine will require some $170 million, the company said.

"We have been advised to pursue the initial public offering at the soonest possible time," Buckingham said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

He said that the move would allow Atlas to take advantage of high copper prices in the international markets, ranging from between $1.60 and $1.80 a pound.

Demand for minerals such as copper has been on an upswing due mainly to demand from China, which is in the throes of rapid industrialization.

The Toledo mine in Cebu was estimated to have 873 million tons of mineral reserves worth roughly $3 billion.

Buckingham said Atlas also planned to list part of Carmen's shares on a foreign exchange.

One option is to list on the London Stock Exchange.

Meanwhile, Atlas said it has appointed Cutfield Freeman & Co. to help it select the smelting firm that would buy the copper it would produce in exchange for equity.

Selecting the smelting firm will put Atlas closer to reopening the Toledo copper mine after more than a 10-year hiatus.

Atlas's copper mine in Cebu started operations in 1955, but production was halted in 1994 following the drop in world market prices of copper.

The Toledo facility can produce 42,000 metric tons of copper a day.

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, the Atlas copper project employed 14,000 workers.

Once the copper project resumes operations, the company may employ some 2,700 people.

At its height, the project was the biggest copper mine in Asia.

Majority control of the project was acquired last year by Alakor Corp.

Atlas, the former owner, unloaded its outstanding debt through a debt-for-equity swap with Alakor and Minoro Mining and Exploration Corp.

Micro-business . . .

From page B1

emerging leadership role and continue fostering innovative entrepreneurship anchored on real opportunities that can alleviate the country's current economic situation.

"(Through Go Negosyo,) we hope to create a climate of optimism," he said. "If foreign investors are optimistic about the country as shown by the appreciating value of the peso, optimism among Filipinos could be more powerful than that."

Shares . . .

From page B1

nomic fundamentals remain strong," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc. "However, we're also due for a correction. We've been up for several days now."

Top-traded Bank of the Philippine Islands fell 50 centavos to P59 while rival Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co retreated 50 centavos to P34.

Telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose P15 to P1,825. *AFP*

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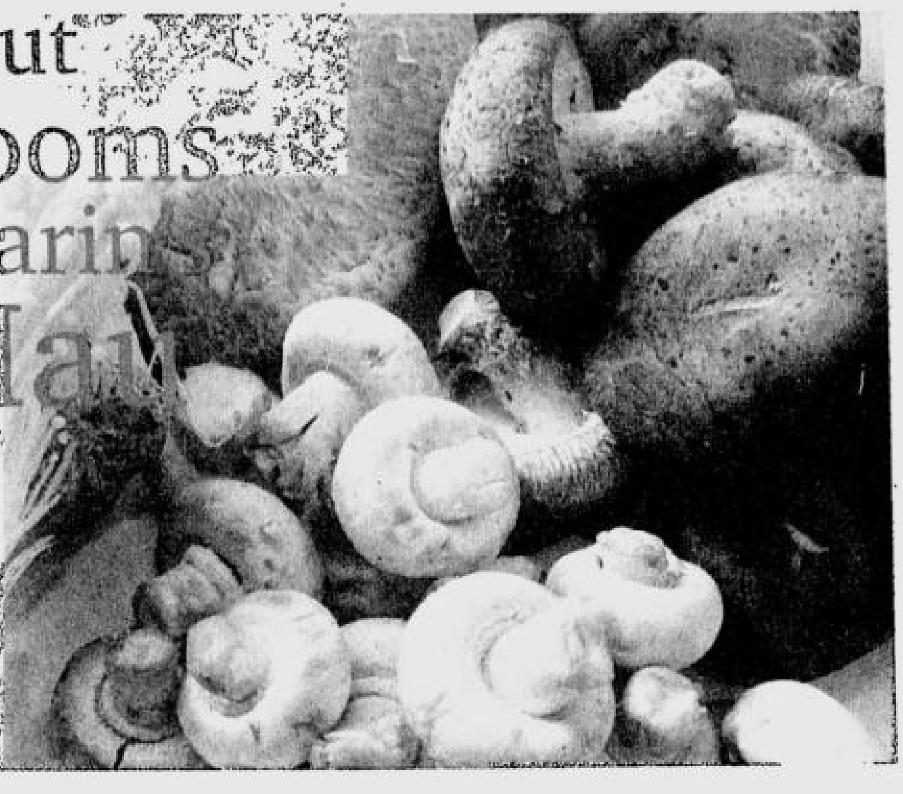
Wild about mushrooms at Mandarin's Tin Hau



MANDARIN ORIENTAL, Manila's premier Chinese restaurant Tin Hau, presents a special gastronomic experience centered on the delightful and nourishing properties of mushrooms. "Wild About Mushrooms" offers the wholesome flavors of monkey head, enoki, shiitake, shimeji, chanterelle, morel, braised tea, black, fresh oyster, and other mushroom varieties in this culinary tribute by Tin Hau's master chefs, from March 6 to 19.

Chinese food lovers will delight and benefit from the healthy goodness of mushrooms. Low in calories, mushrooms contain high levels of nutrients such as proteins, vitamins, and minerals, have no cholesterol, and are virtually free of fat and sodium. It is believed that mushrooms increase immunity, reduce cholesterol, improve digestion, promote blood circulation, and reduce fatigue.

For enquiries and reservations, call Tin Hau at 750 8888 extension 2422 and 2424.

THE SEARCH FOR THE VIDEOKE STAR

The most happening hotspot at the southern Metro Manila area invites singing stars to compete in the hotel's prestigious singing competition—The Bellevue Idol. Open to all employees, the contest will be held every first Monday of the month at the hotel's 20/20 entertainment bar starting March 6 and will culminate in a Grand Finals on Sept. 11. The grand prize winner will win prizes amounting to P100,000 including round-trip tickets to Boracay for two including accommodations and P30,000 pocket money . The winner will also receive a one-month contract as the Bellevue Host at 20/20 bar every Videoke Night. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

City Garden Hotel's March Bonus!

SINCE IT OPENED, CITY GARden Hotel Makati, along Makati Avenue, has slowly gained the reputation of being the perfect hotel for businessmen, executives and individuals.

Its luxurious yet cozy environment immediately transports you away from the hustle and bustle of the city into its uniquely comforting environment, a perfect retreat for a stressed out businessman. Its 160-well appointed Italian inspired rooms make for a comfortable stay. For as low as P1,450 per person based on twin sharing, all the rooms are equipped with the latest room amenities.

For one-on-one meetings and get-together, City Garden Hotel Makati has two restaurants that you can choose from. Le Jardin Restaurant, with its warm and relaxing dining experience, and its more popular Roofdeck Bar and Grill gives you a cozy dining experience with a great view of the Makati skyline, is offering its Chef's Special of "Ribs BBQ & Grills."

For the health and beauty buff City Garden Hotel Makati boasts of a well-equipped Health Club, a swimming pool and the Body & Face by Mendez Spa, to indulge on. A perfect way to relax.

City Garden Hotel Makati is located in Makati's restaurant strip at 7870 Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. For reservations or inquires, please call (02) 899-1111, or its domestic toll free number 1-800-101-GARDEN (427336), or at www.citygardenhotels.com .

THE EXECUTIVE PLAZA HOTEL'S PIONEER TEAM

The pioneer employees of The Executive Plaza Hotel were recently honored for their dedication and commitment to the Hotel. The Hotel, now on its five years of service is successfully growing to become one of the top three star hotels in Metro Manila. Shown in the photo are (front row, from left) room attendant Ronald Cuelana, PR assistant Michelle C. Aglipay, F&B chief accountant Analiza Pagaduan, corporate executive housekeeper Patty A. Martin, telephone operator Madelyn F. Realce, front office supervisor Medz D. Jimenez and room attendant Abelardo Rago (back row, from left) engineering staff Glen Ileto, bellman Ronald Romasanta and Darvin Joseph B. Reyes, and captain waiter Rufino Marmolejo, Jr.

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For inquiries and reservations, you may call (02) 687 0888 or (032) 232 6888 locals 8017,8018,8019 and 8132. You can also visit the website at www.waterfronthotels.net

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INSULAR LIFE PROVIDES CREDIT LIFE INSURANCE TO UNION BANK CARDHOLDERS

Insular Life and UnionBank take their partnership to a new level with U-Secure, a credit life insurance facility for Union Bank Visa clients. Under the partnership, Insular Life will provide life insurance and accident benefits to Union Bank Visa cardholders by paying their card's outstanding balance up to the sum of P400,000 in case of death or total permanent disability. The program also includes a double benefit feature where the amount paid to Union Bank to pay off the balance on the card will also be paid to the cardholder's beneficiaries. Shown in photo after the contract signing are, (from left) Union Bank first vice president Manuel Santiago, Jr., IL senior vice president and sales operations head Marietta C. Gorrez, Union Bank executive vice president Edwin Bautista, and IL senior assistant vice president and worksite marketing head Aileen Beltrano.

PTAA livens up Pinatubo Aeta Children

IT STARTED WITH A NUMBER OF Aeta children walking in the vast idle field at the foot of Mt. Pinatubo going to school in Sitio Alunan (four hours hike) who caught the attention of the immediate past PTAA president Nit Ragaza while on his way representing PTAA in another function together with Tourism Secretary Ace Durano in October last year.

There were three teachers who worked voluntarily to teach the 110 Aeta children from Grade 1 to 4. They were in need of school supplies and even food to eat. The PTAA held a show for a cause dubbed as "PTAA and Galileo Go Retro" on Nov. 16 at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The PTAA members, guests and sponsors joined their hands and raised funds for these children.

On Dec. 19, the PTAA officers and the secretariat went to Sitio Alunan which was fours hours away from the town of Capas, Tarlac, and could only be reached by foot and 4 x 4 off-road vehicles. The PTAA officers handed over a hundred thousand worth of T-shirts, notebooks, school supplies, umbrellas, foot wears, infant food, medicines, groceries for their feeding program and more goodies to the 110 Aeta schoolchildren and their families.

On Feb. 4 this year, PTAA officer turned over the donation from the United Laboratories Inc to the representatives of the Aeta children. UNILAB sponsored assorted vitamins for children/infant, paracetamol, anti-cough and cold medicines. This was held at the Hacienda Luisita, Capas, Tarlac.

The need to continuously support the Aeta Children and their families is appreciated. For your donation and further details, you may call the PTAA Secretariat at 552-0026 to 29.

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PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Formerly Public Estates Authority)

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE VEHICLES

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) is offering for sale, on an "as-is, where-is" basis, the following Unserviceable Vehicles:

1. Items for sale

Item No.	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1	1995 MITSUBISHI L-200 (SFN-360) D/Cab, Pick-up Diesel Fed, Black	P 131,400.00
2	1993 TOYOTA CORONA (ADN-103) 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gasoline Fed, Silver	P 102,960.00
3	1995 TOYOTA TAMARAW FX (SED-677) Wagon, Diesel Fed, Gray	P 56,500.00
4	1993 TOYOTA TAMARAW FX (SEV-678) HSPUR, Diesel Fed, White	P 37,224.00
5	1993 TOYOTA TAMARAW FX (SEK-109) HSPUR, Diesel Fed, Red	P 37,224.00
6	1992 TOYOTA TAMARAW FX (TDH-237) HSPUR, Gasoline Fed, Blue	P 52,026.00
7	1991 TOYOTA LITE ACE (TAK-995) Commuter, Gasoline Fed, White	P 38,375.00
8	1990 TOYOTA COROLLA (SEV-523) 4-door Sedan, Gasoline Fed, Silver	P 27,170.00
9	1995 TOYOTA TAMARAW FX (SED-729) Wagon, Gasoline Fed, Blue	P 46,916.00
10	1990 KIA CERES (SEA-799) 4 x 2 HSPUR Diesel Fed, Red	P 71,920.00
11	1993 TOYOTA CORONA (UHH-206) 2.0 4-door Sedan, Gasoline Fed	P 99,165.00
12	1993 HONDA MOTORCYCLE (SB-9726) 125cc Gasoline Fed, Red	P 3,800.00
13	1993 HONDA MOTORCYCLE (SB-9776) 125cc Gasoline Fed, Red	P 3,800.00
14	1993 HONDA MOTORCYCLE (SB-9716) 125cc Gasoline Fed, Red	P 3,800.00
15	One (1) Lot Junk Unserviceable Motor Vehicles	P 39,000.00/lot
16	One (1) Lot Junk Unserviceable Motorcycles Units	P 1,650.00/lot

2. Interested parties may obtain the Terms and Conditions and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting 07 March to 20 March 2006 from 9:00AM to 5:00PM at the Administrative Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati MM.
3. The first pre-bid conference is scheduled on 14 March 2006 at 2:00PM at the PRA Conference Room.
4. Duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms and Conditions shall be submitted to the PRA Real Estates Bids and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on 28 March 2006 on or before 1:30PM. Public opening of bids shall follow at 2:00PM of the same day.
5. PRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality found therein, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to its interest, without any obligation on the part of PRA to explain the reasons thereof.
6. In the event that the public bidding becomes a failure, the PRA reserves the right to accept proposals for the above items for sale.
7. For inquiries, please contact Engr. Danilo Almoite or Ms. Lilian Tabinga at telephone number 817-47-11 local 174.

(Sgd.) PELAGIO B. LALAP
Chairman- PREBAC

(PDI--March 4, 5 & 6, 2006)

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Building I, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos. 893-6001 to 47 local 1120
Direct Line: 840-1612/Fax No.: (632) 840-1619

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation through its 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the PNOC Board intends to apply the sum of PHP 3,465,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for IT06-202. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PNOC Exploration Corporation now invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of:

TWENTY-EIGHT (28) DESKTOP COMPUTERS
(IT6-202)

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsiveness Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the PNOC EC Procurement Section (c/o Mr. Carlos L. Mejias) from1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the above address and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of PHP 1,000.00.

PNOC Exploration Corporation will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on March 9, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be received by the PNOC EC Procurement Section on or before March 23, 2006, 3:00 p.m. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount indicated in Section III of the Bidding Documents, BDS. The bids, including the eligibility requirements, shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

PNOC Exploration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

This publication is also posted on our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and on the DBM website at www.procurementservice.net.

Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 4, 2006)

HGC appoints Underwriters

The letter agreement for the underwriting of the Home Guaranty Corporation's (HGC) P12 billion, seven-year zero-coupon bonds, which will be used to service HGC's guarantee obligations as well as to fund various corporate requirements, was recently signed at simple rites held at the HGC office in Makati City. Among the signatories were Home Guaranty Corp. president Gonzalo B.A. Bongolan (seated, fifth from left), Philippine Commercial Capital, Inc. (PCCI) senior vice president E. Federico Galang III, SB Capital Investment Corp. executive vice president Conrado Gloria, Jr., RCBC Capital Corp. (RCBC Capital) president Raul Leopando, PCCI president Ma. Florina Chan, Multinational Investment Bancorp. (MIB) president Eduardo Rojas, AB Capital and Investment Corp. president Francis Varela, MIB senior vice president Ma. Lourdes Cristobal, and RCBC Capital first vice president Valentino Bagatsing.

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ASSURING THE HEALTH NEEDS OF CHILDREN

A burgeoning population, an additional mouth to feed. Aside from assuring the stability of the nation's rice supply by selling Iron Fortified Rice (IFR), the National Food Authority ensures the proper health and mental development of these children who at their tender age, are likely to be prone to illness and malnutrition. By introducing IFR in the market through its exclusive rice outlets like the Tindahan Natin and Bigasan ni Gloria sa Palengke, the NFA boosts the government's campaign to improve the Filipinos' nutritional dietary intake of iron micronutrient and address iron-deficiency anemia, one of the leading causes of impaired physical and mental development, sluggishness and susceptibility to illness. The NFA has imported a total of 100,000 metric tons of IFR in 2005 and another 250,000 MT is set to be imported this year. The iron-fortified rice is priced at P18 per kg nationwide.

GMA, Noli turn over housing units to soldiers

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO and housing chief Vice President Noli De Castro turned over 19 housing units at the Camp Riego De Dios Village in Tanza, Cavite to approved buyers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The recipients of the housing units are among the first occupants in the recently-completed first phase of the village, which is a joint project of the AFP and Ayala Land subsidiary Laguna Properties Holdings, Inc. (LPHI).

Arroyo broke ground for the project in July 2003 as the first of several off-base housing communities planned under then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes for AFP personnel, junior officers and enlisted men.

"This is the government's answer to our soldiers' dream of providing good homes for their families," Arroyo said.

The first phase consists of 252 units. Upon completion, the entire 18.17 hectare project will generate a total of 987 residential units.

The village will also have amenities that include a main clubhouse, tennis courts, basketball court, central park with landscaped playground, and a provision for a swimming pool. Areas for a church, school and public market have also been allocated.

The turned over units were availed through the Special AFP Housing Loan Facility of the Pag-IBIG Fund.

Arroyo lauded the efforts of the housing sector to focus on the housing needs of military personnel, in cooperation with the AFP and the Department of National Defense, as part of its overall campaign to address homelessness in the country.

Aside from Camp Riego de Dios, the other off-base housing sites include Camp Evangelista in Cagayan de Oro City, Camp Aquino in Tarlac, Camp Tinio in Cabanatuan City, Camp Lapu-Lapu in Cebu City, Ft. Del Pilar in Baguio City and Bonifacio Heights in Taguig.

OBITUARIES

"Blessed are the
peacemakers,
They shall be called
children of God."
(Matthew 5-9)

In Memoriam

BGen. Oscar M. Florendo, AFP

3 November 1938 - 4 March 1990

Masses will be offered on Saturday, March 4, 2006
at the following:

St. Ignatius Cathedral — 7:30 AM and 6:00 PM
Camp Aguinaldo, Cubao, Quezon City

St. Joseph Chapel — 6:15 AM and 6:15 PM
Camp Crame, Quezon City

St. Michael Chapel — 5:30 PM
Fort Bonifacio, Makati City

Sanctuario de San Jose — 7:15 AM and 7:15 PM
Greenhills, Mandaluyong

Shrine of Mary Queen of Peace (Our Lady of Edsa) — 12:15 PM and 6:00 PM
Edsa cor. Ortigas Ave., Quezon City

Immaculate Conception Parish Church — 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM
Aurora Hills, Baguio City

Baguio Cathedral — 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM
Baguio City

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*"A great man is he
who does not lose his
family's heart!"*

On March 4, 2006, the 9th death anniversary of

BENITO LOZANO MERCADO, JR.

Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Our Lady of Lourdes	Kanlaon, Quezon City	5:30 AM
Sacred Heart	Morning Breeze, Caloocan City	6:00 AM
Divine Mercy	Mapayapa I, Quezon City	6:00 PM
St. Alphonsus Mary De Liguori	Magallanes Village	6:15 AM
OMI Chapel	Mapayapa I, Quezon City	6:15 AM
Queen of Peace Chapel	Banaue, Quezon City	6:20 AM
St. Benedict Chapel	Alabang Hills, Alabang	7:30 AM
St. Gabriel	Potrero, Malabon	6:00 PM

By his loving wife, **Nenita Vergel de Dios**; children & grandchildren: **Rene, Timothy and Angel; Glenn & Cholle Laya, Denise and David; Gary & Melissa Zamuco, Arianna and Roque; Ryan & Tricia Aguila, Vino and Sofia**; only daughter **Lidie Rose**; his sister, **Teresita Lugue**; sisters-in-law **Sr. Lilia Hilario, ICM and Corazon V. Santos**; nephews and nieces.

Prayers requested for the eternal repose of his soul!

Our Dearly Beloved
MARIA LUISA "MOONYEEN" C. LEGAZPI
(August 22, 1934 – February 28, 2006)
Peacefully joined our Lord, her children Marco & Michael on February 28, 2006 at the age age of 71.

Her husband PAQUITO; children CYNTHIA, FRANCIS & MARCELY, RAMON, CRISTINA & BIMBO; grandchildren MICHAEL, ANGELICA, LYNDON, ZEANNE, MICHAELA, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 5, 2006 at the Holy Cross, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 2 p.m. Mass at Arlington.

ROSITA MONTECILLO VDA. DE SAGULLO

of Candelaria, Quezon

widow of **Dr. Jose M. Sagullo**

*Peacefully joined her Creator on 28 February 2006,
in New York, USA at the age of 90.*

Her cremated remains will be interred in Candelaria, Quezon at a date to be announced later.

She is survived by:

CHILDREN : **NESTOR** and **Celia Mercado**
ISMAEL (†) and **Lorelei Gonzales**
RIZALINA
LITA and **Gary Salcedo**
ROBERTO (†)
RAUL and **Emily Rivera**
WILMA (†) and **Efren Dimaano**
CARINA
RAMON and his former
spouse **Pamela Javier**

GRANDCHILDREN & GREAT GRANDCHILDREN
BROTHERS AND SISTER
BROTHERS-IN-LAW AND SISTERS-IN-LAW

Prayers for her eternal repose and for her loved ones will be greatly appreciated.

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BUSINESS

ADB clears turnover of Napocor debt

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK has given its formal consent for the government to transfer the debts of National Power Corp. to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.

Napocor's debt to ADB has been pegged at about $500 million, or P26.5 billion.

The government plan to turn Napocor's liabilities over to PSALM is seen to pave to the way for the privatization of the power firm's assets, officials said.

Investors consider Napocor's huge debts to be a major hindrance in the efforts to sell its power assets.

Officials from the Department of Finance, National Transmission Corp., PSALM and Napocor, represented the government yesterday during the signing of the Omnibus Amendment Agreement.

ADB country director Thomas Crouch signed the agreement on behalf of the institution.

Following the transfer, the ADB will now have to run after PSALM, instead of Napocor, to collect on debts.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the agreement would make it easier for the government to get the consent of other creditors of Napocor, like the World Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), to transfer its other debts to PSALM.

Napocor owes a total of $7 billion, or about P372 billion, to all its creditors.

"The universal consent is important because it will enable us to accelerate the privatization process and manage the loan obligations of the National Power Corp. more prudently," said Nieves Osorio, president of PSALM.

The privatization of heavily indebted Napocor, which had been a burden to the similarly troubled government, has been cited as one of the key measures to improve the country's fiscal standing.

For bankers, stiffer 'fit and proper' rules

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has issued a circular imposing stiffer "fit and proper" rules to govern officers and directors of banks and quasi-banks.

The BSP circulated the tighter set of rules on Feb. 10, expanding the scope of disqualification of directors and officers by adding other crimes and offenses which the Monetary Board approved last January.

The principle behind the "fit and proper" set of banking rules is provided in both the General Banking Act of 1949 as well as in the General Banking Law of 2000.

The law also provides the BSP with the power to bar those found unfit to be a bank director or officer, and to put in place a screening process that will ensure that an individual is fit and proper to hold such a sensitive position.

The object of the revised rules is to ensure that a bank's management possesses a high degree of integrity and adequate experience, education, training and competence to do the job and afford better protection to depositors and the public in general.

The BSP has adopted the same "fit and proper" framework as the Bank of England. But top officials have admitted that the rules have proven to be less effective because they could easily be overturned in Philippine courts.

UNCERTIFIED

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila (left), Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Melchor Rosales and Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla (right) inspect LPG tanks seized during a raid. Authorities have confiscated 165 LPG cylinders that do not bear the Philippine Standard mark from five establishments in Quezon City and Caloocan.

Gov't hopes to widen tax relief coverage

THE GOVERNMENT hopes to raise at least P10 billion this year from taxes and duties that have been bolstered by administrative reforms.

Once it meets its target, the government will then widen the coverage of its income tax relief program to include more taxpayers.

The Department of Finance said that of the amount, P8 billion should be raised by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, while P2 billion must come from the Bureau of Customs.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said only upon realization of the expected revenues could the DOF endorse an increase in the personal exemptions of income taxpayers.

The BIR recently implemented measures to improve its collection effort.

Tax measures

The measures are "tax mapping," where BIR officials visit establishments to check on their tax compliance, the filing of charges against tax evaders, the grant of an amnesty-type program, and enhancement of its auditing capabilities.

The Bureau of Customs is working on improving its revenue collection through tightened monitoring of shipments, computerization and a revitalized drive against smuggling.

A bill has been filed in Congress seeking to increase by 50 percent the amounts of personal exemptions—a move that will provide relief to taxpayers burdened by the recent increase in the value-added tax rate.

Deductions

Should the bill be enacted into law, taxpayers will be granted the following amounts of allowable deductions from their taxable income: P30,000 for single taxpayers, P37,500 for heads of family, and P48,000 for married individuals. The bill likewise seeks to raise to P12,000 the amount of additional deduction per dependent.

But the DOF said it would not be endorsing the bill, saying the government still could not afford the potential revenue losses, estimated to run into billions.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier said the DOF wanted Congress to simply focus on another pending bill seeking to exempt minimum wage earners from the income tax. He said the expected revenue loss from the second bill, estimated at P500 million a year, was something the government could afford.

Minimum wage earners are those whose annual income does not exceed P60,000.

Michelle V. Remo

Tunay na kada-segundo ang singil! Matipid!

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office - Visayas**, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

A:	Name of Contract	: **Construction of Tourist Assistance Center**
	Location	Port of Tagbilaran, Tagbilaran City
	Brief Description	: Construction of 1-storey Building
	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	P6,269,679.46
	Source of Funds	: PPA Corporate Fund
	Contract Duration	One Hundred Fifty **(150)** Calendar Days
	PCAB Registration	**Small B** "Building & Industrial Plant"
	Required Equipments	:

1)	1 unit	: 6 Wheeler Truck	- Owned/Leased
2)	2 units	: Bar Cutter	Owned
3)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	- Owned
4)	2 units	: Concrete Vibrator	Owned
5)	1 unit	: Compressor w/ spray gun	- Owned
6)	1 unit	: Concrete Cutter	Owned/Leased
7)	1 unit	: Oxy-Acetylene Cutting Outfit	- Owned/Leased
8)	1 unit	Compressor w/ Jackhammer	Owned/Leased
9)	1 unit	Welding Machine	Owned
10)	1 unit	Plate Compactor	Owned/Leased

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract to be bid, have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract, must have completed a contract/project similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past **Five (5) years** immediately preceding the publication of this invitation with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement. Applications for eligibility, as well as the preliminary examination of bids, will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	March 13-24, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	March 13-31, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	April 7, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Serging Osmena Blvd. North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,100.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P2,500.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

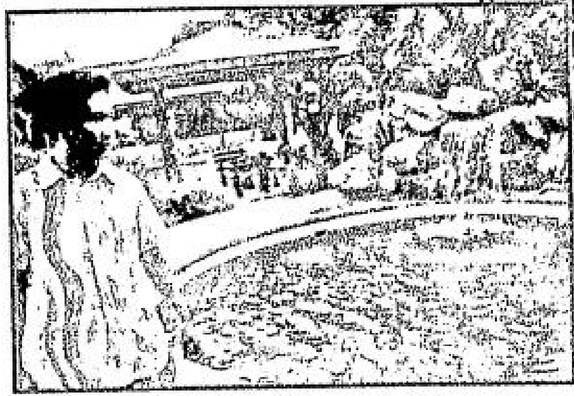
The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **JAMES J. GANTALAO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 4 & 13 2006)

Creating a place of retreat and relaxation



THE GUIDING idea for this resort-like garden is to make it a living environment, says Inos who wanted the whole place to be a living space where one can do various open-air activities.

THE COUPLE enjoys strolling around the garden (or sometimes lounge on one of several cabanas that dot their garden) as they consider this relaxing and great stress reliever.

By Charles E. Buban

FOR THE MANY INQUIRIES THEY receive about their place, this retired couple has one uniform response: "We haven't decided on that yet and at the moment, this is exclusively for our grandchildren (as well as family friends)."

Opening their place to the public is farthest from the couple's minds.

In fact, when Dr. Cirilo and Rosalina Sanchez decided last year to build this place—a 4,000 sq.m resort-like garden in San Jose, Nueva Ecija—all they wanted was a place where their grandchildren, all 11 of them, could come together and take a respite from the scorching summer heat.

"Before, we would all go to some nearby resorts (which are not very many in Nueva Ecija) or take several hours drive to some place else. It can get really tiresome sometimes so my wife and I decided why not convert a portion of our rice fields here and create a place where we could also enjoy resort-like amenities but much more private. Besides, my wife and I could use a place where we can relax and retreat from the daily grinds of life," says Cirilo, a former health officer in Nueva Ecija who still oversees a rice mill business.

The couple didn't need to look very far for help to realize their plan as they asked the services of Lorenz Inos, a self-taught landscape artist turned sought-after design pro who is based in Cabanatuan.

What they want

"Initially, I asked the couple what they want: Does it have to have a splash of color? What are the structures they would like to find in the place, Does it need to be low-maintenance? Is water a problem? What about adding several water elements like fishing lagoon, waterfall, and swimming pool? All these things must be considered," Inos says.

The first challenge was where to source the water for the garden, so the couple constructed a deep well. Once a steady supply of freshwater was established, designing the resort-garden got much easier.

"From the simplest pool to the most ornate fountain, no feature adds greater value to this planned resort-like garden than a body of water," explains Inos after constructing a swimming pool and a wading pool (complete with waterfalls) as well as a 2-meter deep, 500-square-meter lagoon, which he filled with ordinary and red *tilapia* as well as *hito*.

"Feeding the fishes can be a relaxing break in your daily routine," admits Ciliro.

Native plants

The next was incorporating native plants into the garden's landscape. Inos says plants like carabao grass, bromeliads, and palm trees, create a lower-maintenance garden.

"Using native plants are becoming more popular nowadays because of the growing awareness of the many qualities they bring to a garden. Native plants are more adapted to our climate, and have fewer problems with disease and insects," Inos explains.

Besides, Rosalina Sanchez said enjoying the flowers, textures and colors of the plants is very relaxing and a great stress reliever.

Another element Inos incorporated in the resort-garden is the use of antique woods, driftwoods, tree roots and old molave and yakal hardwoods, which were sourced from dismantled railroad tie and from demolished Spanish/Filipino-styled colonial homes.

"Collecting these items proved to be the toughest as it took us more than six months scouring several provinces (like La Union, Benguet and Ilocos) where there are still abandoned railroad tracks, old houses being demolished or collectors of this type of materials," recalled Inos.

In the end, the resort-garden, which is now 90-percent complete, has created a restful refuge characterized by shade, shelter and privacy that the couple has envisioned.

Says Rosalina: "Finally, we now have a place to unwind, where we could entertain family and friends and where we could reconnect with nature."

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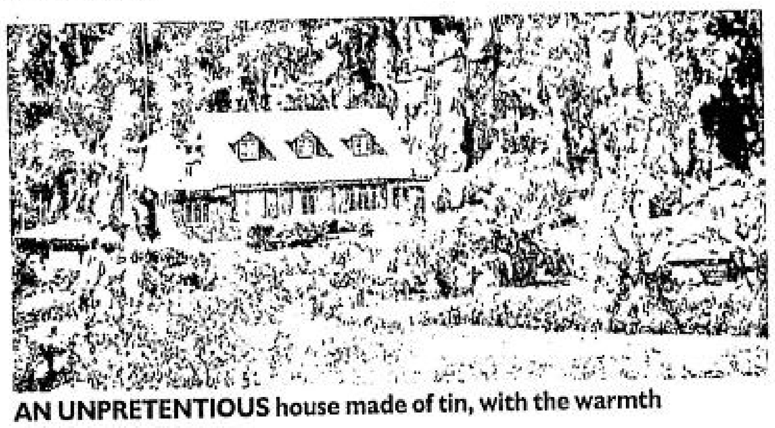


AN UNPRETENTIOUS house made of tin, with the warmth preserved inside.

THE ANGLICAN church: a landmark in the center of the quaint town of Sagada.

A weekend in Sagada

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

ON A ROBUST WEEKEND TREK to Sagada, Mt. Province, my friends and I experienced a threefold treat. Primarily, the cool clime and idyllic surroundings were highly conducive to physical recharging and spiritual recuperation.

Second, we learned how ingeniously the local folks have coped with and adapted to the encroaching modernization. And, finally, we were roused to an awareness of the effects of our actions on the environment.

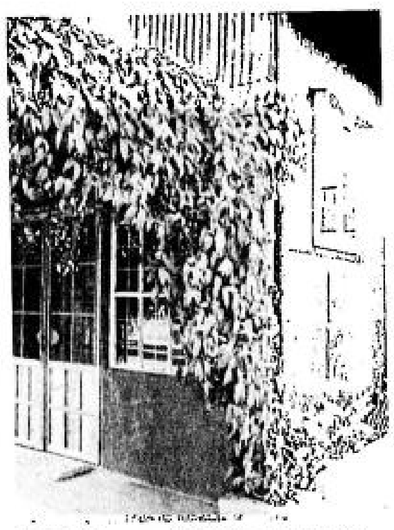
Recharging, recuperation

We were billeted in a charming place called Rock Inn, an unassuming place that proved to be a comfortable and restful refuge. It was built along the lines of a typical sagada house, mainly constructed of tin in order to collect and preserve warmth indoors. Nestled on a hill overlooking a rocky landscape, it constantly reminded me that I was far from the city.

An invigorating distance away, we found further testament to the remoteness of our hideaway in interesting caves, majestic waterfalls, sparkling springs, lofty pine trees and awesome rice terraces. To top off our explorations, we always came home to an excellent cup of homegrown sagada coffee. These were truly days that awakened both the soul and the sensibilities.

Coping and adapting

The town of Sagada is a quaint collection of little houses along one main concrete road. It is a community dotted with tiny coffee shops, souvenir shops and art galleries. The standard houses of tin or corrugated galvanized iron sheets, which I used to think of as unsightly, I now recognize to be the people's most practical building material.



ROCK Inn and Café is also made of tin, but softened by greenery.

It is not too expensive for this farming community and it is lightweight enough to be transported over rocky and mountainous terrain. Their buildings may be spartan looking on the outside and may not be picturesque enough to go with the rice terraces, but what I now appreciate is a people with very limited options making the best of what they have.

I wondered if living in a house of tin meant very cold indoor temperatures as well, since tin is not a good insulator. But one day in the middle of a tiring hike when hunger forced us to seek out strangers for help, Ate Susan, one of the local residents, welcomed us into her seemingly-unimposing home.

We discovered that the interiors could be quite extraordinary because the floor, walls and ceiling were all made from solid pine wood panels 10 times superior to the standard items now offered in the open real estate market. We not only felt the sincerity of her hospitality, but likewise the warmth and cheer of her home. The aroma of pine smelled almost as good as the food she unselfishly prepared for us.

Environment awareness

At a corner newsstand, we chatted with a vendor about the recent landslide in Southern Leyte, and she mentioned with all simplicity that they have avoided any similar occurrences because they have been careful to replant the trees they have cut. It had apparently been ingrained in the people to give back to the land that which they have taken. This is not only a just and noble view, it is a profound understanding of the basic laws of nature as well. Man is the steward of his environment. If we use nature responsibly, we will never be hostage to it.

That weekend in Sagada was an eye-opener in many ways. We allowed nature to sweep us in its grandeur. The people revealed themselves to us in their warmth and simplicity. And the mix of these two elements showed us that this little town high up in the mountains is one of the best little corners of our land.

Megaworld's McKinley Hill Village sets sales record

MCKINLEY HILL VILLAGE, A HIGH-end residential subdivision at the 50-hectare McKinley Hill mixed-use project of Megaworld Corp. in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, is 70-percent sold. Since its launch in May 2004, its prime residential lots, with an average size of 238 square meters, have attracted a growing number of investors.

McKinley Hill Village is bounded on the northeast by C-5 Road, and is located near the prestigious Forbes Park subdivision and the Manila Golf and Country Club.

Within easy reach

The project is now complete, as is Upper McKinley Road, the two-kilometer, tree-lined main avenue that connects it to the Makati central business district.

"Residents of McKinley Hill Village now have a fast and hassle-free route to the Ayala Center via Upper McKinley Road, which links up with the existing McKinley Road," said Noli Hernandez, Megaworld vice president for marketing.

Apart from Makati, other key destinations such as Ortigas Center and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport are within easy reach.

Five elegantly designed model homes have been drawing visitors to the project site, whose focal point is an exclusive leisure area near the gated entrance.

Clubhouse

A perfect weekend recreation spot is a Tuscan-themed clubhouse, already complete. The clubhouse features stonework accents, textured walls, faux timber beams, an earth-toned façade, floors in textured tile finish and arched doorways.

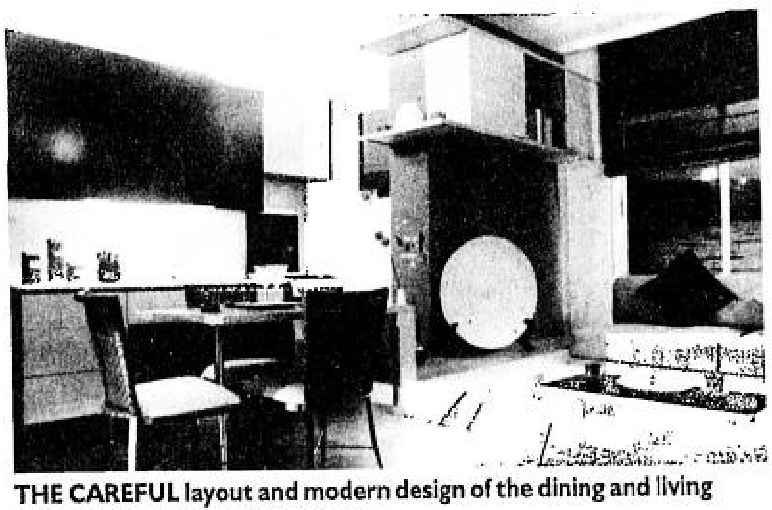
As the centerpiece of the amenity area, it hosts a trellised courtyard, fitness facility and multipurpose area. Other upcoming amenities are a combined free-form and lap pool, a children's wading pool and a landscaped playground.

The McKinley Hill Village is among Megaworld's ongoing residential projects that have set a record as the fastest selling in Fort Bonifacio. These include the six-tower Forbeswood Heights and The Bellagio I and II at the Forbes Town Center in Bonifacio Global City.

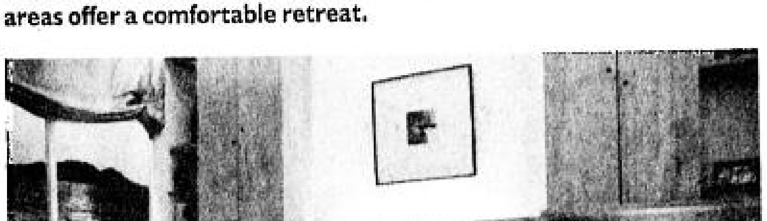
ANOTHER PALM GROVE TURNOVER

Nearly 85 percent complete, Palm Grove Condominium Phase 2 has already started the turnover of one of its newest buildings, Peach Palm. With Phase 1 already sold out, DCMI Homes has built five more medium-rise condo buildings to comprise Phase 2 of the development. Peach Palm, Windmill Palm A and B and Paradise Palm A and B, each with four floors and two bedroom units, are opening up 76 more units for the project. Palm Grove Condominiums is a Carribean-inspired enclave developed by DMCI Homes in Better Living, Parañaque, which integrates exclusivity and convenience in urban living. For inquiries call 888-333 or visit www.dmcihomes.com.

Crown Asia holds Picasso Tower groundbreaking at Presidio



THE CAREFUL layout and modern design of the dining and living areas offer a comfortable retreat.



WIDE windows welcome the fresh breeze and natural lighting into the intricately designed master's bedroom.

A SECURE FUTURE FOR THEIR FAMILY tops the list of priorities of young, active urbanites. But today's trying times allow no short-cuts, attaining this equals years of hard work coupled with determination, making wise choices and acquiring veritable investments.

The first quarter of the year signaled the fulfillment of more lifelong dreams as the country's biggest homebuilder, Crown Asia held the groundbreaking of the second tower of Presidio at Brittany Bay—the Picasso Garden Condo Residence.

Architectural masterpiece

As the first vertical development of Crown Asia, Presidio at Brittany Bay is an architectural masterpiece of 16 towers interplaying in height and size that redefine urban living. The 6.8-hectare enclave is located at the boundary of thriving Sucat and City of Taguig, offering a wonderful view of the Sierra Madre Mountains and Laguna de Bay as its backdrop. The charming design style of San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture serves as the encompassing theme for Presidio.

The incorporation of nature into a vertical residence lends a unique characteristic to the Picasso Garden Condo Residence. While other space-deprived condominiums around the metro leave no room for lush greens, at Picasso residents can enjoy walkways left open to cool air and select units with a garden in its backyard. The tower itself is also surrounded by beautiful landscaping.

Fresh alternative

The 7-story, V-shaped structure of Picasso is a fresh alternative from the traditional vertical design of most condominiums. With the spread of three wings per floor, each unit is granted more natural lighting and cool breeze from the bay. Five units are limited to each wing to ensure privacy and generous breathing room for the residents.

Units at the Picasso Tower are thoughtfully designed to suit the unique needs and taste of each individual and family. Prices range from P1.7 to P2.3 million.

- **1-bedroom unit.** Maximized living space and ingenious layout make this 39-sq-m residence perfect for independent singles and young couples.
- **2-bedroom unit.** Beginning families will find the 51-sq-m residence a comfortable retreat with two bedrooms, toilet and bath, spacious dining and living areas, kitchen and a linen closet for more storage space.

Presidio's "city by the bay" features a collection of low- and mid-rise, residential and mixed-use (comprised of residential and commercial units) condominiums.

5 towers

Picasso is among the first five towers Crown Asia primarily launched for Presidio:

- **Da Vinci Tower,** Presidio's first tower which is already near completion is a charming 5-story mixed-use condo;
- **Rembrandt Tower,** a mixed-use condo offering exclusivity and the luxury of bigger residences with only five units per floor;
- **Michelangelo Tower,** a versatile 10-story garden condo rise featuring the largest selection of model units—the typical unit, loft-type or bi-level units, garden units and lavish penthouse units;
- **Monet Tower,** the 12-story condo is the highest rise among the Y-shaped garden residences and nestled in the heart of Presidio to offer the best vista of the bay and mountains.

Presidio boasts of a Village Center to house leisure and athletic amenities and facilities and a Town Center to offer the convenience of living just 10 meters away from commercial establishments while maintaining privacy and security for its residents.

Property previews may be arranged by calling Crown Asia at 718-3465 and 718-3400, or visit www.crownasia.com.ph on the web.

THE PICASSO Garden Condo stands out from Presidio's self-contained, multilevel hub by the bay.

Int'l construction, mining show promises to boost billion-peso industries

THE PHILIPPINES REAFFIRMS ITS POsition as a prime destination for international exhibitions and conferences with two of the biggest trade shows this year.

Konstruktura Asya 2006, which will be mounted by the Philippine Constructors Association, is the only international exhibition of the Asia-Pacific construction industry.

Also set to further advance the local mining industry is Mining Asya 2006, which is also being organized by PCA and coorganized with the Chamber of Mines and the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association. This reinforces the bond between these three powerful organizations covering the construction and mining industry.

Both world-class exhibitions are scheduled on March 15-18 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila.

Roving exhibition

Konstruktura Asya 2006 is an annual roving exhibition held to coincide with IFAWPCA's country membership meeting where PCA is the founding member. This year is an extraordinary event as PCA will host IFAWPCA's 35th convention and will celebrate its golden anniversary.

"One can never undermine the significance of hosting such a prestigious event. Armed with the confirmation from various foreign delegations coming to Manila in March, exhibitors at the show will surely be exposed to a totally new market that is interested in investing in the Philippines," said Jorge Consunji, PCA president.

Region's biggest gathering

The show alone is expected to attract over 700 international buyers and 20,000 local visitors and buyers. Key decision makers and business leaders from all over the Asia-Pacific region are expected to attend the event.

The event is expected to be one of the region's biggest gathering of local and international trade buyers and visitors composed of architects, builders, designers, developers, mining companies, engineers, purchasers and end-users.

Mining Asya 2006, on the other hand, offers the best business opportunities for companies to showcase their state-of-the-art equipment, products and services to the global mining industry that is ready to invest in equipment and new technology.

Mining Asya 2006 shall also cater to providers of mining-related services for exploration, mine production, processing or preparation, material handling, environmental remediation and safety.

Over 2,000 foreign investors have confirmed their visit to Mining Asya 2006 for future investment potentials.

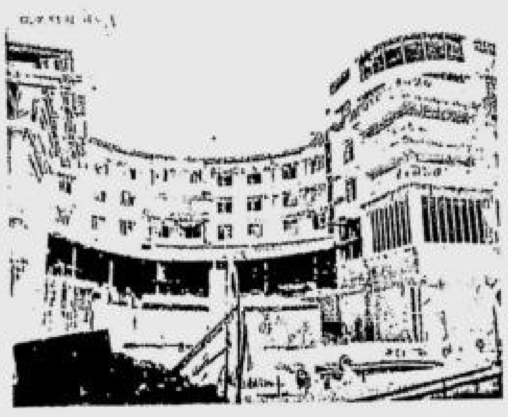
Business networking

To further emphasize the relevance of both mining and construction to each other, the organizers have put together a business networking and business-matching activity where the construction industry will be able to provide the mining industry with potential business opportunities and vice versa.

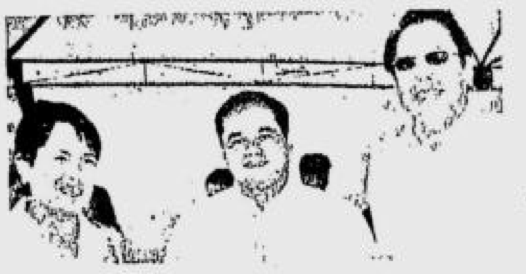
Various product presentations and demonstrations have also been prepared to equip the market with up-to-date information on both industries.

For more information, call Jing Lagandaon, deputy managing director of Global-Link Marketing & Management Services Inc., the event manager, at 750-8588, fax 750-8585 or e-mail jing.lagandaon@globallinkph.com.

First phase of One Serendra dev't topped off



ONE SERENDRA Section A is on tract for completion and turnover as early as the first quarter of 2007.



From left are Ayala Land Premier Residential Buildings SVP Angie Lacson, Taguig Vice Mayor George Elias and Ayala Land president and CEO Jaime I. Ayala.

ONE SERENDRA, ONE OF AYALA LAND'S most anticipated developments under its high-end business unit Ayala Land Premier, held its momentous ceremonial top-off on Jan. 17. It marks the completion of the first phase of the development, which is a sprawling garden residential condominium in Bonifacio Global City.

ALP celebrated the occasion with Ayala Land's various heads in attendance, along with representatives of ALP's partners, members of its technical project team and other invited guests like Taguig Vice Mayor George Elias.

The top-off celebrates the completion of One Serendra Section A's structural and concrete works, effectively signaling the project's halfway completion. From here, Ayala Land Premier will concentrate on the finishing and electromechanical works in time for the section's scheduled turnover in the first quarter of 2007.

Important milestone

Kate Ilagan, Ayala Land's assistant vice president for Ayala Land Premier residential buildings, considers the top-off an important milestone as it assures ALP clients that they are on schedule and will be able to meet their turnover deadline.

"It's very important for us to deliver what we promised our buyers, both in terms of schedule and quality. Prompt delivery is one of the legacies of Ayala Land," she says.

Representatives of One Serendra's architects, L.V. Locsin Partners and GF & Partners, were also on hand to commend the significance of the event.

"We consider this top-off an accomplishment. Mixing medium-rise condominiums with a lush garden background is a very innovative design idea from Ayala Land, and getting this far is certainly a milestone," enthuses architect Ted Narciso, partner in charge of Design from GF & Partners. "Serendra is using a trendsetting approach to condominium design and we're very proud to be part of it."

Commendations

During the event, Ayala Land Premier also formally recognized its partners for achieving two million safe man-hours on the construction site on Dec. 27, 2005. Project manager Design Coordinates Inc. and contractor EEI Corp. each received commendations noting the high standards of safety for their workers.

"We consider this very important because it means that no mishaps occurred or that none of our workers got hurt," says EEI president Robert Castillo. "We care about our people and we make sure that they're safe." He also expressed satisfaction that One Serendra is nearing completion.

Ilagan shared that subsequent ceremonies for the project will include top-offs for other phases of One Serendra, as well as official turnover rites in 2007. Around this time next year, unit owners will be invited over to check their units—or to "punch list," in the industry terms of the construction business—before they move into their new homes.

Garden condo complex

One Serendra is Ayala Land Premier's development in Serendra, a distinctive, sprawling garden condominium complex spanning all of 12 hectares located at Bonifacio Global City, the Philippines' newest center of culture and trade. It offers a luxury of space with its bigger unit sizes and low-density development, together with themed gardens and such country club-like amenities as an exclusive spa.

Offering truly suburban living at the heart of the metropolis, it is ideal for people who want the benefits of urban expediency without losing the graces of a vast and airy suburbia. Model units are available for viewing at the Serendra Sales Pavilion on 26th Street in Bonifacio Global City.

Jett heat pumps at Bohol Beach Club, other hotels, resorts

NOW MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WILL BE enjoying Bohol Beach Club in Panglao Island not just for its blue skies and white sand, but also for its new Jett heat pump installed by Jett Sales & Services Co. Inc.

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After Hilton Cebu Resort and Bohol Beach Club, Jett is now working on huge heat pump projects in six other hotels, resorts or buildings—the Victoria Court in Manila, at Parklane Hotel, Golden Prince Hotel, Jackson Siady's Commercial Building, Ugtong Cave Beach Resort in Cebu and at Marco Polo in Davao.

Jett heat pump, the latest addition to the wide array of heater lines of Jett Sales & Services Co. Inc., the provincial partner of Jett Water Heater Co. Inc., is such a boon to hotel and resort owners because of its capacity to produce large amount of refreshing hot water at amazingly lower power consumption.

Only Jett heat pump can provide a quality heating system that actually lets commercial establishments save up to 70 percent on electricity expense, while protecting the natural environment as well.

Making big money in distressed properties

TO LEARN MORE TECHNIQUES ON HOW to profitably invest in distressed properties, Urban Institute of Real Estate invites investors to attend a seminar on "Making Big Money in Distressed Properties" at the Maximo function room, second floor, Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City, on March 8, from 1:30 to 6 p.m.

The four-hour lecture includes how to solve the owner's problem, the overall strategies, keys to success, how to find distressed properties/sellers, how to make your offer, important provisions for your protection, negotiating strategies with owner and lender, and common mistakes that should be avoided.

For details, call Urban Institute at 681-0928 or cell phone 0916-426-9174 or e-mail at urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

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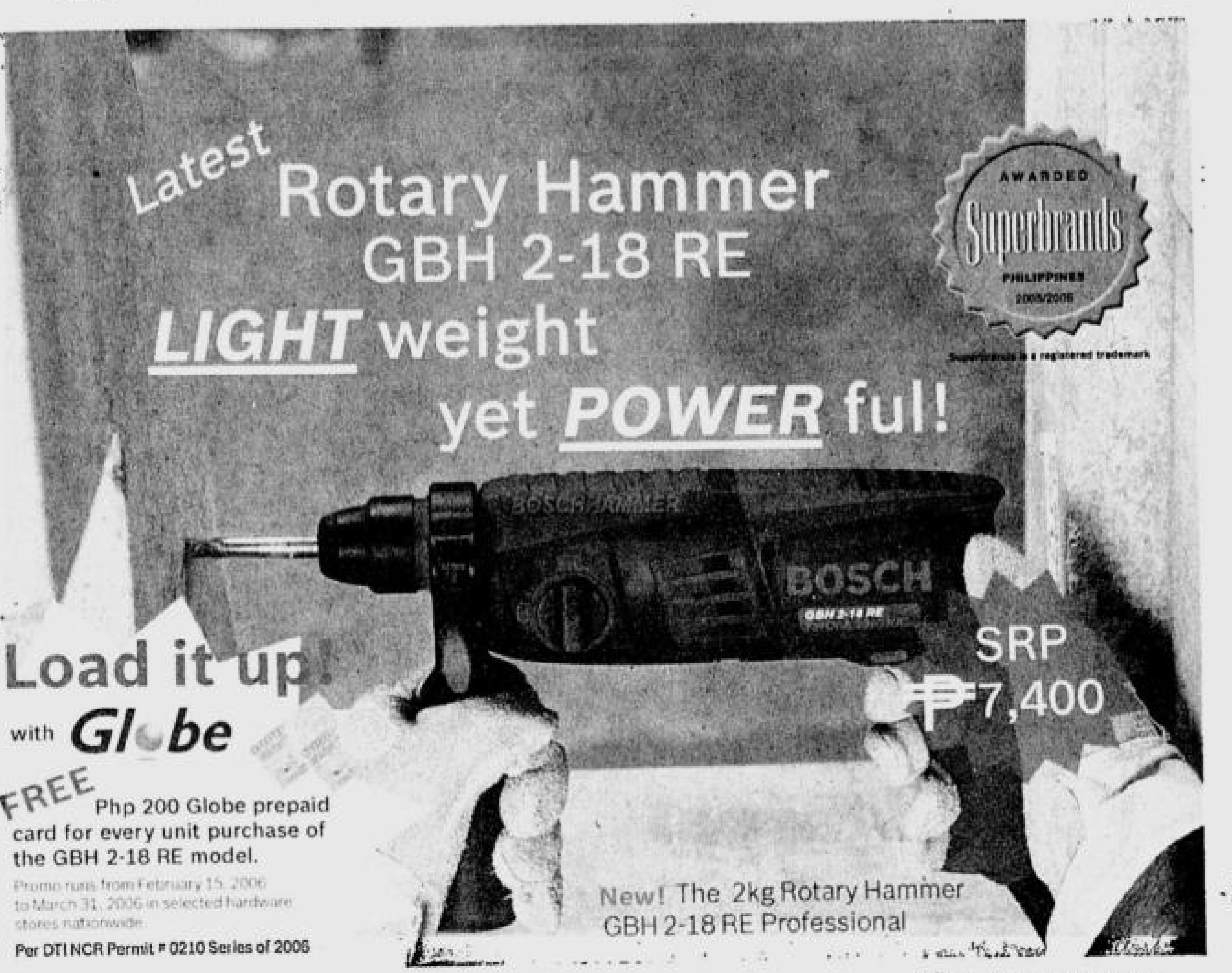

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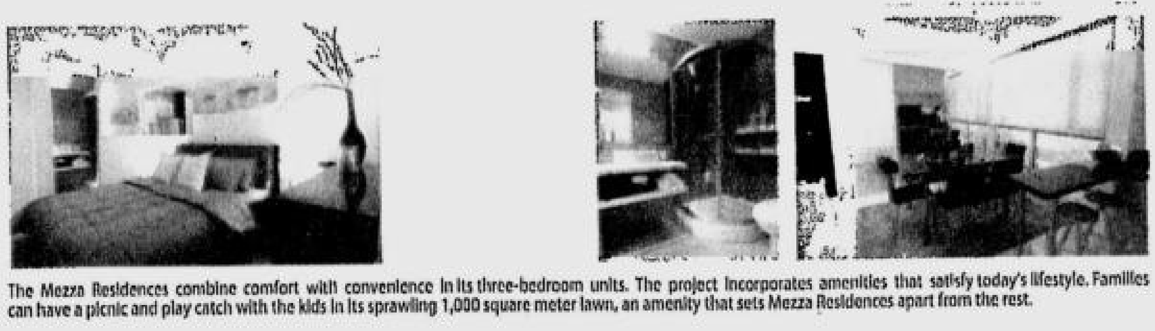
MEZZA RESIDENCIES:
HIGH-RISE LIVING AT ITS BEST

From the country's most respected names in retailing and mall development comes a project that's soon to be a by-word in condominium living—the Mezza Residences.



The Mezza Residences combine comfort with convenience in its three-bedroom units. The project incorporates amenities that satisfy today's lifestyle. Families can have a picnic and play catch with the kids in its sprawling 1,000 square meter lawn, an amenity that sets Mezza Residences apart from the rest.

Situated at Aurora Boulevard corner Araneta and Guirayan Streets in the heart of Quezon City, the impressive Mezza Residences has four 38-storey residential towers. Offering one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and suite units with introductory prices ranging from one to five million, Mezza Residences is suited for young professionals yearning for their first taste of independence or starting-out families seeking a place to call home.

"Mezza Residences is metropolis living at its most convenient," shares Julie Jalandoni, Assistant Vice President for Sales and Marketing of SM Development Corporation (SMDC). "Everything one can ever need is right here, thus saving on gas, energy, and precious time. We really had the lifestyle of today's urbanites in mind in developing this project – addressing as many of their living requirements."

Each tower has three high-speed elevators and ample parking. There is a main lobby in each tower and a welcome lobby on each floor as well. An individual laundry drying area for each unit and a centralized garbage collection and disposal system are provided for added convenience.

Supported by the SM Group of Companies and Banco de Oro, Mezza Residences allows you to enjoy a wide variety of activities all under one roof. Cafes, service, and retail establishments are conveniently located at the podium at the ground and second level.

"Everyone can go home and do all their shopping right here. Young urbanites can dine out and have a good time with their friends," adds Jalandoni. "Mezza truly finds its hallmark on convenience. But more than just that, SMDC puts this together in a great package with well-planned floor areas and generous open spaces."

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Mezza Residences takes pride in its lush greens. Unique to this project is its sprawling 1,000 square meter lawn—an inviting place where families can have a picnic, play catch with the kids, or take an afternoon nap. Giving importance to healthy living, a Zen-inspired garden with a meditation area and a reflexology path relaxes the mind and spirit of the weariest urban dweller. Kids can soak up the sun in the kiddie pool while adults can stay fit by swimming in the 25-meter lap pool.

Here at Mezza Residences, it's all about living the city life to the fullest.

It is a short distance away from the Central Colleges of the Philippines, the Immaculate Heart of Mary College, the UERM Hospital, the UERM Memorial Medical Center, the LRT 2 Sta. Mesa Station, and the bustling Araneta area. Everything indeed is within your reach. The Mezza Residences is a project of the SMDC. For inquiries, call 831-51-51 or 0918-888-1203. Log on to the SMDC website at www.smdevelopment.com. Model units are available for viewing at the SM City Sta. Mesa.

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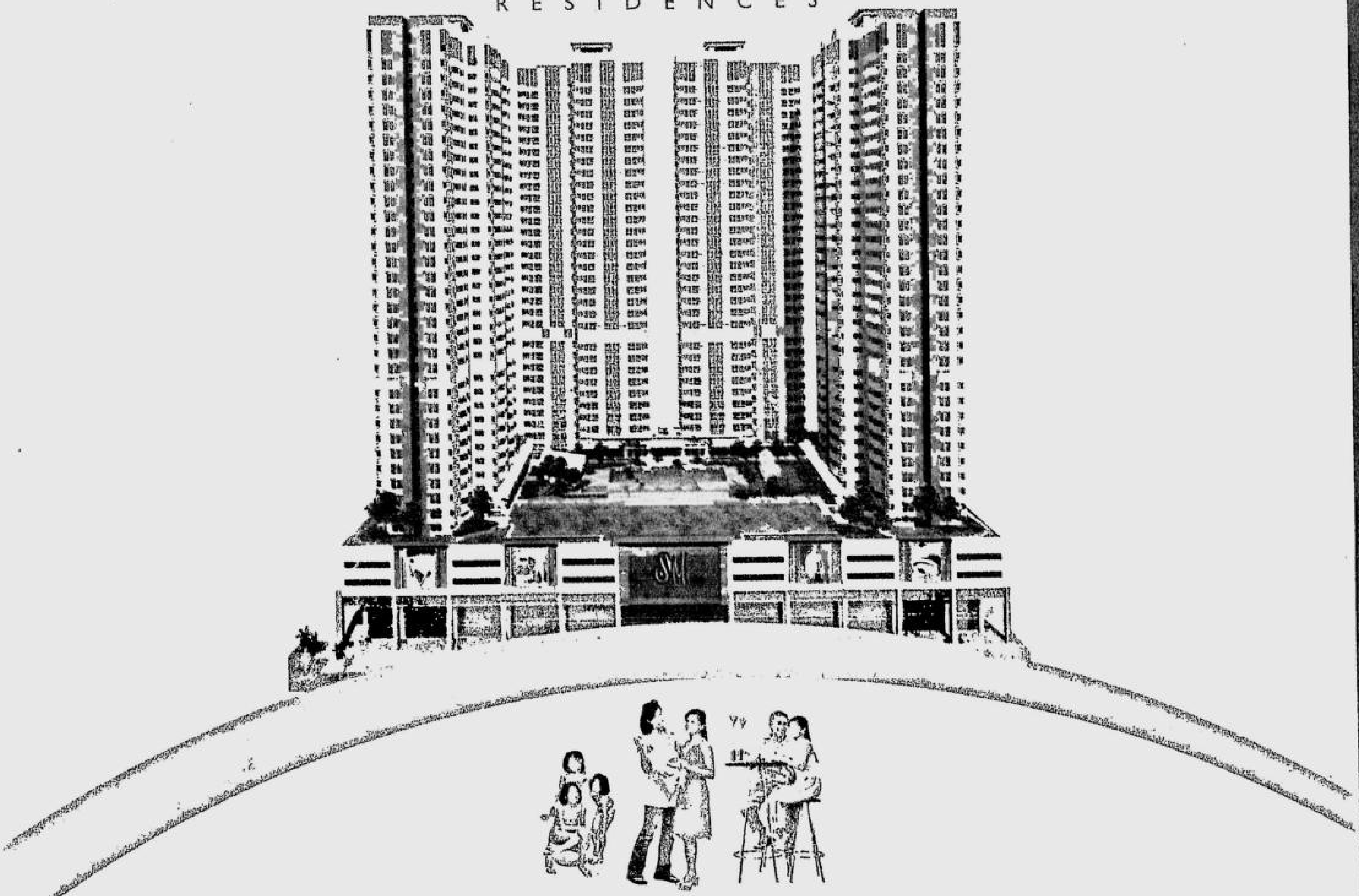
mezza
RESIDENCES



All under one roof. Yours.

Panoramic view of Metro Manila Skyline
Picture window for all units
High ceiling units
Bridgeway to SM City Sta.Mesa
Modern convenience with cafes, service and retail shops at the podium
Outdoor function deck and function rooms
Zen garden with meditation area and reflexology path
Healthwalk and cabanas dotting the gardens
25 meter lap pool with submerged lounge deck
Interactive water jets, wet play area and playground
A thousand square meter lawn
A total of 8,000 square meters of amenities and open space dedicated to bringing you fun and recreation

Visit our model units at the SM City Sta. Mesa.

Call 831-5151, 0918-888-1203 or visit www.smdevelopment.com

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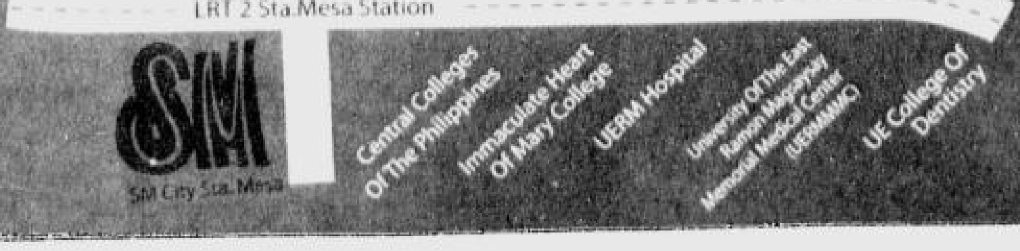
SM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Landowner:
BANCO DE ORO

Aurora Boulevard corner Araneta Avenue, Quezon City


Araneta Avenue
Aurora Boulevard
LRT 2 Sta.Mesa Station
CCP Extension
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Editor Pam Pastor
Creative Director Tim Yap

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Coming out

KC Concepcion is back in **Super!** page C2

Why **Mich Dulce** suddenly disappeared from the **Big Brother House** page D1

Polo Ravales takes it off for **Super!** page D2

The new **State of Boracay** page E1

Photography by: RAYMUND ISAAC
Makeup and Styling: MARLON RIVERA
Cover star: POLO RAVALES in Folded and Hung

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The ride of your life begins with the win of a lifetime.

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*Approved applications during the promo period will also earn raffle entries.
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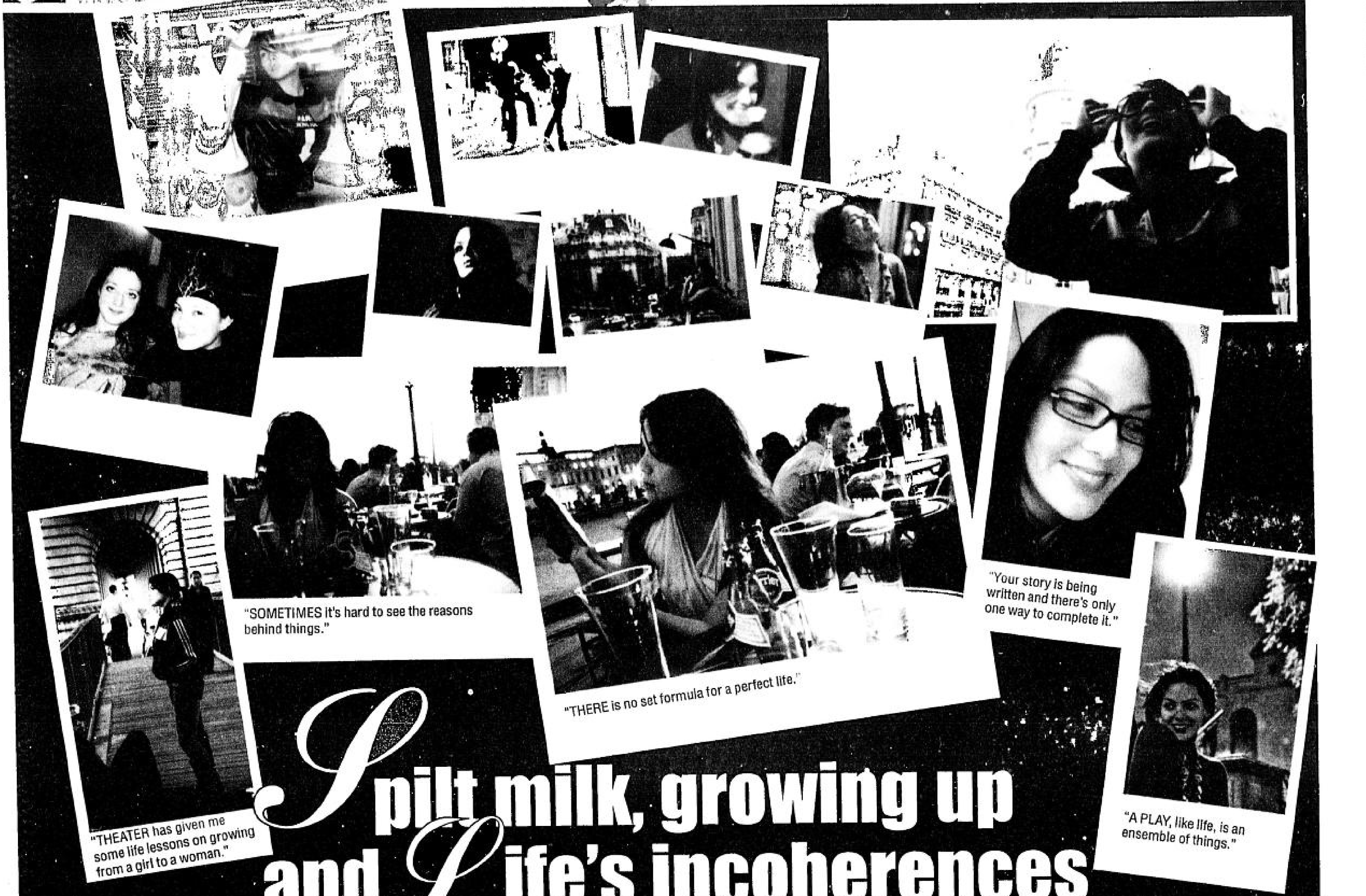

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Spilt milk, growing up and Life's incoherences

KULIT CO.

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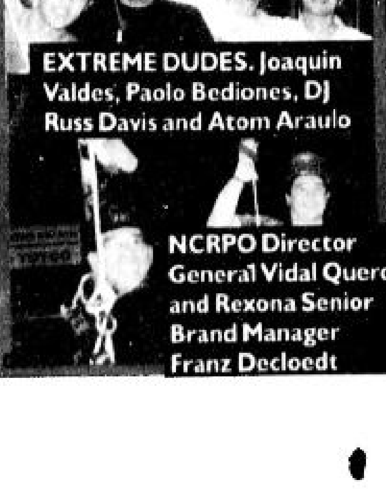

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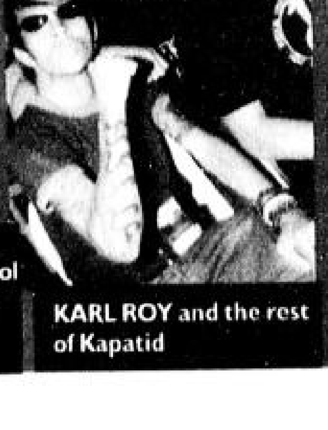


KARL ROY and the rest of Kapatid

EXTRA CHALLENGE. Paolo Bediones

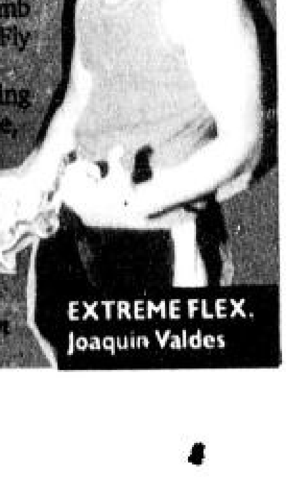
Living the X-life

A REAL MAN LIVES HIS LIFE TO THE extreme. He is not contented with having just a normal and simple life, he is built to live with an adventurous one.

That's why Rexona recently launch the very first ever stunt-live billboard in Guadalupe to set the standards on how a man lives his life. The launch was capped off with an event that gathered men from all walks of life. From celebrities to government officials, everyone played to their extremes. The activities included in the event were Xtreme zip line, Xtreme Vertical run, Xtreme Drop down, Xtreme crazy climb and doing stunts like the Australian Fly and the Ascending Rappel.

Rexona gives men the choice of living an extreme lifestyle but at the same time, having enough confidence... the underarm confidence that is. So to all the men out there—go up, get up, and jump out that building. Kidding. I say we all should live to the extreme.

David Milan



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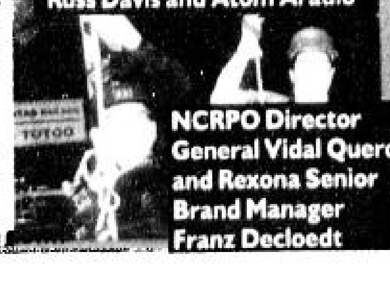

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Living the X-life

A REAL MAN LIVES HIS LIFE TO THE extreme. He is not contented with having just a normal and simple life, he is built to live with an adventurous one.

That's why Rexona recently launch the very first ever stunt-live billboard in Guadalupe to set the standards on how a man lives his life. The launch was capped off with an event that gathered men from all walks of life. From celebrities to government officials, everyone played to their extremes. The activities included in the event were Xtreme zip line, Xtreme Vertical run, Xtreme Drop down, Xtreme crazy climb and doing stunts like the Australian Fly and the Ascending Rappel.

Rexona gives men the choice of living an extreme lifestyle but at the same time, having enough confidence... the underarm confidence that is. So to all the men out there—go up, get up, and jump out that building. Kidding. I say we all should live to the extreme.

David Milan

EXTREME FLEX. Joaquin Valdes

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Strum and Bass

By Gino de la Paz

As The Little Willies, Norah Jones and her pals manage to sound a little less melancholy and, like, a bit more fun

THREE OR FOUR YEARS ago, it seemed like I couldn't spaz out at any Starbucks without hearing Norah Jones' slow-burning, baby-making music in the background. Or worse, hearing latte-loving chicks rave about Norah Jones' slow-burning, baby-making music in the background. My brothers, all together now, "Zzzzz..."

Millions of pairs of eardrums had an opposing view, however, snapping up the Grammy winner's 2002 debut "Come Away With Me" and its follow up, "Feels Like Home," by the truckload. But, like, I wasn't impressed. To me she was still Snorah Jones.

On the other hand, as a self-confessed audiophile, I've made it my mission to expand and evolve my already eclectic taste in music. And if that kind of education meant listening to a Norah Jones side project, then bring it the hell on.

The self-titled debut by The Little Willies—the group formed by Norah along with her pals Lee Alexander (bass), Jim Campilongo (electric guitar), Richard Julian (guitar, vocals) and Dan Reiser (drums)—is sophisticated Americana with a slight Lower East Side vibe. The New York band grew up tapping their feet to the likes of Hank Williams, Townes Van Zandt, and Willie Nelson. (To those who, like me, only learned to read and write in the 80s and/or 90s, much less understand music, go ahead and Google away.)

A loose mix of covers and originals, the thirteen tracks on the CD borrow elements from blues, classic rock, and country. Now if the "C" word turned you off, don't let it. This is far, far away from Dixie Chicks territory. "Streets of Baltimore" is reminiscent of your grandpa's Don Henley records (yes, records) while the last track, "Lou Reed," is pure cowtippin' fun. "Roll On" is bluesy without sounding scarily earthy and all in all, this first effort would make an interesting soundtrack to a slightly more serious roadtrip. By "serious," I mean "adult."

If you're looking for rap, house, or new generation rock, you've totally got the wrong address. But if you appreciate classics from Bonnie Raitt or The Eagles, or newer alt-country stuff from Ryan Adams or The Be Good Tanyas, clear space in your iPod for The Little Willies. It may take a while to get into the classy honky-tonk patina of their guitar twangs and Western swing, but trust me, the introduction will make you cultured way beyond your years.

The debut CD by The Little Willies drops on March 6. From EMI Music Philippines.

ANLENE Bone Expert, in global partnership with General Electric, the worldwide leader in bone scan machine technology, is at the forefront in educating consumers on bone health and osteoporosis by providing FREE bone health check nationwide. The ANLENE Team, with new bone screening machines, will be visiting malls, supermarkets, and offices to share news on how to maintain strong bones and prevent osteoporosis.

ADVT

Stronger Bones, Fuller Lives!

Adoracion Rosario
All-around Mom, 55 years old

Sa bahay, kahit trabaho ng lalaki kaya kong gawin. Eight years na kasi akong umiinom ng Anlene. Would you believe that at this age, umaakyat pa ako ng 15-foot water tank? Ako din ang nagpipintura ng aming bubong at naglilinis ng gutter. Inaakyat ko din ang malunggay tree to harvest its leaves and fruits. Lahat 'yan kaya kong gawin dahil before I reached my golden age, umiinom na ako ng Anlene Active. At noong 50 years old na ako, I continued my habit by moving to Anlene Gold. At 53, I was proven to have the bones of a 28-year-old. With Anlene, hindi lang ako housewife, I'm a super handywoman!

Grand Prize winner of P100,000

Natividad Remojo
Swinging Survivor, 67 years old

Mahilig akong mag-ballroom dancing. Pero after 42 years ng pagiging teacher, nagkaroon ako ng osteo-arthritis. Hindi curable ang sakit ko. Simpleng paglalakad lang masakit na, lalo na ang pag-akyat ng stairs. I felt so helpless. I can only rely on pain relievers and a quadrant cane para mabawasan ang sakit. Lalo akong nanlumo dahil I had to give up ballroom dancing. Buti na lang na-discover ko ang Anlene Gold. I read that it was effective in preventing bone loss among Asian women. For three years, I made it a habit to drink Anlene Gold. At mula noon, napapansin ko na nababawasan ang sakit. I started to move with ease. Now, kaya ko nang lumakad without using my cane! And of course, I'm back dancing again with my husband. With Anlene in my life, I'm free to do what I love to do.

2nd Prize winner of P30,000 gym membership

Haydee H. Quijano
Fitness SuperMom, 35 years old

Mag-isa kong pinapalaki ang apat kong anak. At ang isa sa kanila ay may cerebral palsy pa. But that's my life and I have come to accept it. It's physically draining kaya I use all the help I can get. I'm really glad na Anlene lang pala ang sagot sa sitwasyon ko. It helps me carry out my duties at home and at work. Dahil hindi lang ako single mom, I'm also an Aerobics instructor. Everyday, I handle 3 sessions of Aerobics and weight-training exercise for my gym class. Pagdating ko sa bahay, I have to do household chores and attend to my kids. Anlene gives me the energy to do all. Talagang super mom ako with Anlene!

3rd Prize winner of P10,000 sports package and P7,000 gym membership

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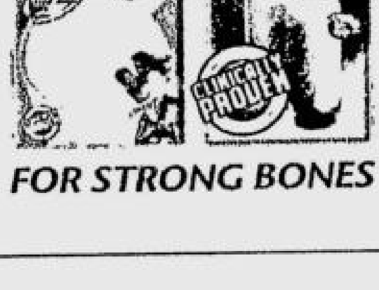

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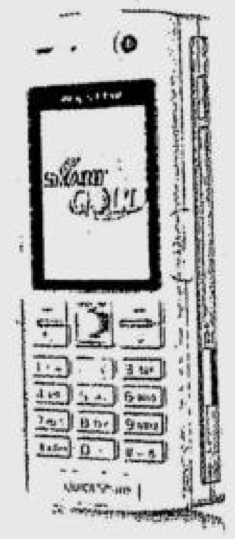

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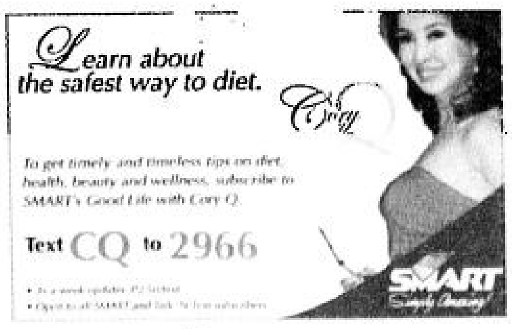
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SUPER! PBB SCOOP

Why Mich Dulce disappeared from the Big Brother House

Tim Yap

'The reason I joined was to show that this is me. That even if you evict me for who I am, that's fine. The thing is, I put myself in an environment where people can judge'

LA FASHIONISTA HAS LEFT the House. And it's not because she was evicted by the celebrity housemates. "I got anxiety attacks. And they had to take me out kasi I had asthma due to anxiety," Mich Dulce said.

In an exclusive interview at the Philippine Heart Center where Mich was confined, Super! sat down by her hospital bed, surrounded by a couple of friends, her *yaya* (who she was ready to go bald for in one of the show's challenges) and her doting mom ("Now I know who really cares for my daughter.").

"I don't think I can talk yet, I get anxious every time I recall the incident," she told me while holding back her tears. She was given 24 hours to return to the house, but was dissuaded by her doctor from doing so. "My psychologist and doctor told me that it would be too stressful an environment for me to go back to."

Today's telecast of the immensely popular Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition will feature Mich saying goodbye to her housemates and giving them her farewell presents.

What brought the anxiety attacks? "It started when Keanna told me that my crying affected the house too much. So since all of the housemates were my *barkada* who I care for so much, I didn't want them to feel upset. So I held back on my emotions, kept it all in. I guess this is what led to my outburst. Now I can't even watch the show, because when I do, I get an anxiety attack."

Artist mode

"I am an artist. I write and draw everyday. I listen to music and inside, you can't do any of that. And the effect on me is different. The psychologist said that as an artistic individual, you think with the right side of your brain. And it was easier for me to get affected than the other people *kasi* artistic *ako*."

Mich tells me that at first, she was more than excited to come into the Big Brother House. "I thought it was all gonna be fun and I didn't know. And *kung alam ko lang na ganito ka*-stressful *sana hindi na lang ako sumali*. It's really, really stressful."

The first two weeks were spent bonding with housemates, at the same time facing challenges like having no toothbrush, deodorant and other stuff that challenged their sense of hygiene. She said that was also able to conquer a lot of her fears, "I held live fish! I hate dogs, but I had to give a dog a bath. But because I had asthma, it made me weak. I was even made to clean carabao sh*t with my bare hands—and I enjoyed every minute of it!"

Women empowerment

She stated her initial purpose. "I wanted to represent the fashion scene, and my charity is the Women's Crisis Center. My band, Death by Tampon is all for women empowerment." She was being her true self all the way, a lover more than a fighter. "Even if I meet you for a day, I'll say, 'I love you!' If I confronted other housemates, it was because I wanted to be real and not backstab anyone." She told me about her

WHY MICH/ D3

MICH AND MOM. "Now I know who really cares for my daughter." Mother and daughter bonding at Mich's room at the Philippine Heart Center.

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The Second Coming of Polo Ravales

By Pam Pastor

Photos by Raymund Isaac, all clothes by Folded and Hung

He thought he'd never make it back. But he was wrong

HE THOUGHT HE'D NEVER make it back. And perhaps people thought the same thing.

But good things happen to good people. And that's what happened to Polo Ravales.

He took an unexpected break from show business in 2003 due to the mismanagement of his career. "I didn't see it coming," he said. The sudden departure from an industry that he loves so dearly brought on bouts of depression. But Polo channeled his sadness into something positive. He started working out. "*Dun ko binuhos yung* depression *ko*," he shared. "I never thought *makakabalik ako*. People were telling me that it's hard, that very few people can do it."

But the gods of show business had other plans for him.

He was off the radar for about a year when the opportunity to return came as unexpectedly as his departure.

One afternoon, on their way to the mall to watch a movie, Polo and his friend talked about his future. "*Pare, ano kayang mangyayari sa akin? Babalik ba ako ng* show business? Or **dapat na akong** mag-work? *Ang hirap, parang nakabitin ako*," Polo told his friend.

His friend spoke prophetically. "*Sa tingin ko may* second coming *ka pa*."

That very same day, Polo ran into Manny Valera who soon became his manager.

"*Ang bilis*, it was like God answered my question," Polo said.

The time away from show biz taught Polo a number of lessons. "Life in our industry is not permanent. Which is why you should enjoy the work while it lasts," he said.

No wonder Polo seems to be so appreciative these days. And he shows it by working extra-hard. Although he knows the life of a celebrity has its downs ("You lose your privacy, *yung konting mali mo lumalaki* and *may mga chismis tungkol sa'yo*."), he knows he has it good. "Our work is relatively easy. You work, you get paid, you meet a lot of people, people treat you well."

When he has time off, Polo likes seeking refuge in spas where he enjoys massage treatments. He also quenches his thirst for speed by going to Subic for jet-skiing. "I'm a beach person," he said.

Polo has a lot of things to look forward to. He's come a long way from his life as "Ice" during his TGIS days. Now 23, he feels ready for more mature roles.

He's part of "Magika," the new fantaserye that GMA 7 will be launching on March 20. He's playing a *bida-kontrabida* and his character's love triangle with Angel Locsin and Dennis will unfold in the coming weeks. There are also plans for new movies.

But right now, Polo is focusing all his attention on his fashion show for Folded and Hung which will be held on Monday. "I've been working out in preparation for the show. It's my first major fashion show."

Polo was recently chosen as the brand's newest endorser. "It's my honor. I'm so flattered. I used to buy clothes from them and I used to think, "*Ang sarap sigurong maging endorser ng* F&H. I love their polos," he said, seemingly oblivious to the pun he just made.

That dream is now a reality. But Polo still has a lot of other dreams. He wants more challenging roles. "I want a gay role. Or maybe play someone mentally retarded," he shared. And, just like every actor, he's also hoping to win an acting award.

Why not? Anything can happen, after all. It is his second coming. And it looks like he's here to stay.

ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

The thing about fame is that...
You get to do less of what you used to do and more of what you dreamed of doing.

The thing I love most about what I do is...
I get to play different characters that are completely opposite of who I am. The work keeps me challenged all the time.

People might be surprised to know that...
At 5'7" , I have extraordinarily big hands and feet.

The most important thing I've ever learned is that...
Life is a journey, everything you experience serves a purpose in your life. You just have to know how to make the most of what you have and take positive lessons from your experiences.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that...
During the time I took a rest from show biz, with the intention of giving myself a new perspective in terms of my career, personal life and physical look, I had moments when I was unsure that show biz and the people might not accept me back. And that feeling made me question my confidence in my self and the people who worked with me during those times.

And what taught this to me was...
That once you have made a decision about something, you stick to it no matter how difficult and unsure the outcome will be. Believing in yourself and in the people who believe in you will make you stronger, but your perseverance and your hardwork will determine the result of your efforts.

The secret to happiness is...
To appreciate all the blessings that come your way and share them to others.

My best ever outfit consisted of a...
I've always been a casual kind of guy who loves to have both comfort and style in anything I wear. F&H low rise jeans fit me so well and makes me look great and I feel good about myself, confident at how I look. A couple of Lacoste and Ralph Lauren Custom Fit shirts, Suunto watch.

My Super! Saturday night consists of...
If not working or at home with my family, I prefer intimate gatherings with close friends for dinner, chill out in a cozy bar or going out of town to recharge and relax.

If I was invisible for a day, I would...
Sneak in a Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Calendar Photo Shoot.

The thing that makes me most angry is...
People who are rude, inconsiderate and selfish.

If I was the most powerful person on earth...
I will make sure that everyone gets a fair share of opportunities.

The best thing about family is that...They'll stick with you til the end.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say...
I wish Polo was here.

If money was no option...
I'll travel around the world.

When I retire, I would like...
To enjoy the comforts of life..

The world would be a much better place if...
Everyone just gets along.

The thing that makes my life worth living is...
My family, the experiences I go through, and the special people I meet along the way.

My greatest hope for the future is...
For Filipinos to live like first world citizens.

The worst thing somebody said about me was...
When I was starting out in show biz, someone told me that I was chubby and that I'd better lose weight or else! I didn't appreciate the comment then, but now, I completely understand. And now I know that looking great is only a by-product of staying healthy.

My favorite moments are when...
I spend quiet time away from the city.

My most embarrassing moment was when...
I accidentally ran into a glass door in a store in Glorietta.

I'm saving up for...
All the stuff that a single guy saves up to in preparation to a new life when I get hitched.

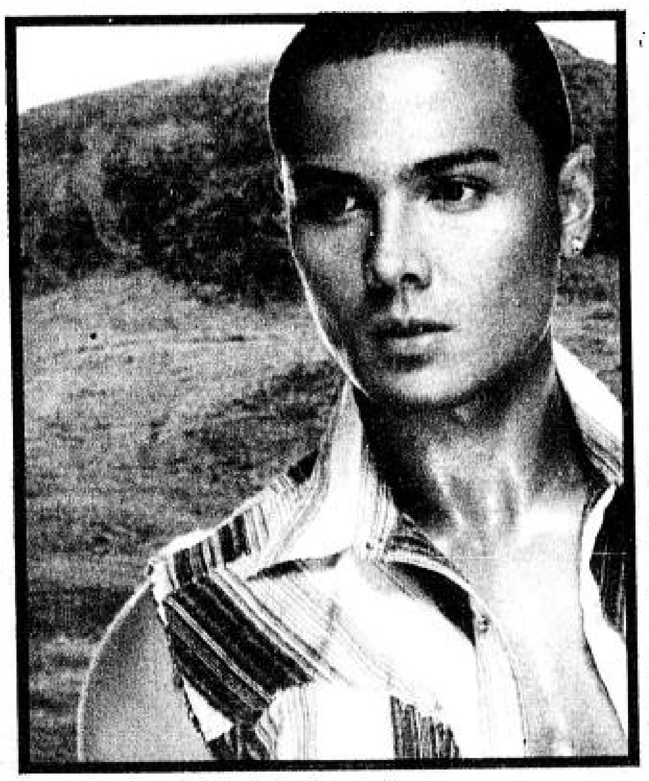
My biggest indulgence is...
Setting up my car.

My current state of mind is...
Of great anticipation. I am so blessed to have been able to come back in show biz with good projects, successful shows, tremendous support from my GMA family. And now, joining the F&H roster of endorsers, my mind is working overtime in anticipation and excitement as to what new beginnings and opportunities this will bring me.

If someone would play me in my biopic it would be...
Jake Gylenhaal

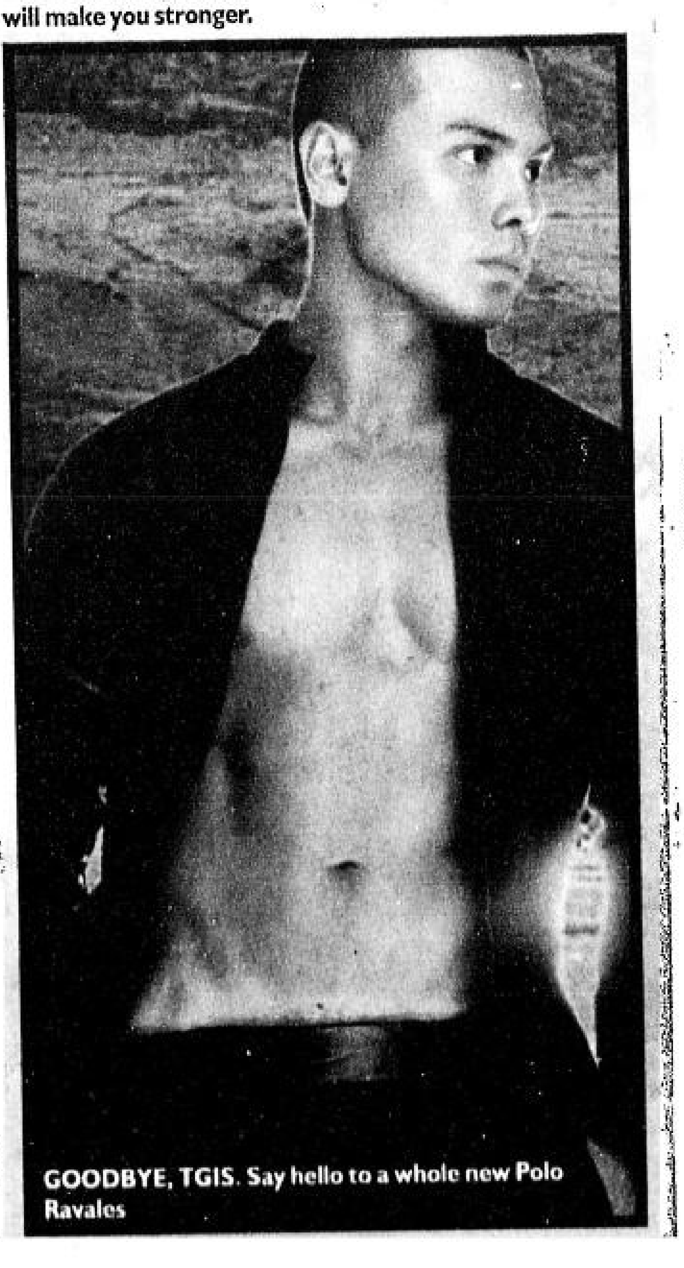
My 5 favorite words are...
Life's how you make it.

I aspire to be... Able to give my best in everything that I do and bring out the best in the people around me.



HE'S BACK and he's loving it.

BELIEVING in yourself and in the people who believe in you will make you stronger.



GOODBYE, TGIS. Say hello to a whole new Polo Ravales

Why Mich Dulce disappeared from the Big Brother House

From page D1

close friendship with Keanna, that they vowed to be best friends even after the show is done. "I'll even invite her to my gigs in Saguijo and MDC—I don't care what other people will think."

Looking back, she didn't get to do her own research about the show. "I really didn't even know what the show was all about—I've never even seen an episode of the first season! I didn't act, and I didn't treat it like a game. I didn't have any strategy." The only strategy she had were the outfits she was planning to wear, hopping from a Cecile Zamora tee to a Team Yap (thanks, Mich!) shirt from her Store for All Seasons on Shaw Boulevard.

The hard part

"In the first day, I was like, 'I have to wear make up!' Then the next day, I treated it like my house. After a while you forget na, except for the robotic cameras. *Kasi kunyari, nag-iiyakan kayo tapos* you hear this sound kkrrrrrr—it's the robotic camera zooming in on you."

How about the microphone? "We attach it to ourselves first thing when we wake up. There's a penalty if you don't wear your mic. It's grounds for eviction. You can't have secret messages."

What she thought set her apart from the other inhabitants of the house was the fact that she was not really inclined to join showbiz. "I entered as a designer, and I'm going to leave as a designer." Although I heard that she's now getting offers from the network, which she is giving much thought to.

The third week was the start of the hurdles for Mich. "I was having a hard time because I was getting into arguments with a lot of people, who were my friends." When the whole brouhaha over the bald issue came about, she kept crying because she really wanted her nanny to get the P100,000. So even after Rico Robles sacrificed his own hair (because he has been bald before, whereas it took Mich 12 years to grow her curly hair), the money actually went to her *yaya*.

"There were a lot of times that I could not explain myself to them and I didn't feel I had to. But at this game I guess you have to say how you feel so that viewers know." I asked her if there were some things that the other housemates intentionally did just to get attention or pity. "*Ako wala, sila ewan ko*. I could not tell acting from nonacting. I believed that everything happening was sincere. I really loved everyone, trusted everyone with their friendship."

Sensitive baby

After a while things started to change in the house. From bonding buddies, everything became emotional. "I became the sensitive baby, *pero in reality 'di naman ako talaga ganun ka-sensitive eh.*"

"*Grabe*, it's so hard to explain to people how it was in the house. Each day felt like a week. A week felt like a month." Right smack center of her hospital bed, she would occasionally heave sighs of relief as she recalled her experience in the house. Mich would often smile as she remembered the incidents inside, trying to put a brave and happy facade in front of me, doing her best to put her housemates in the most positive light.

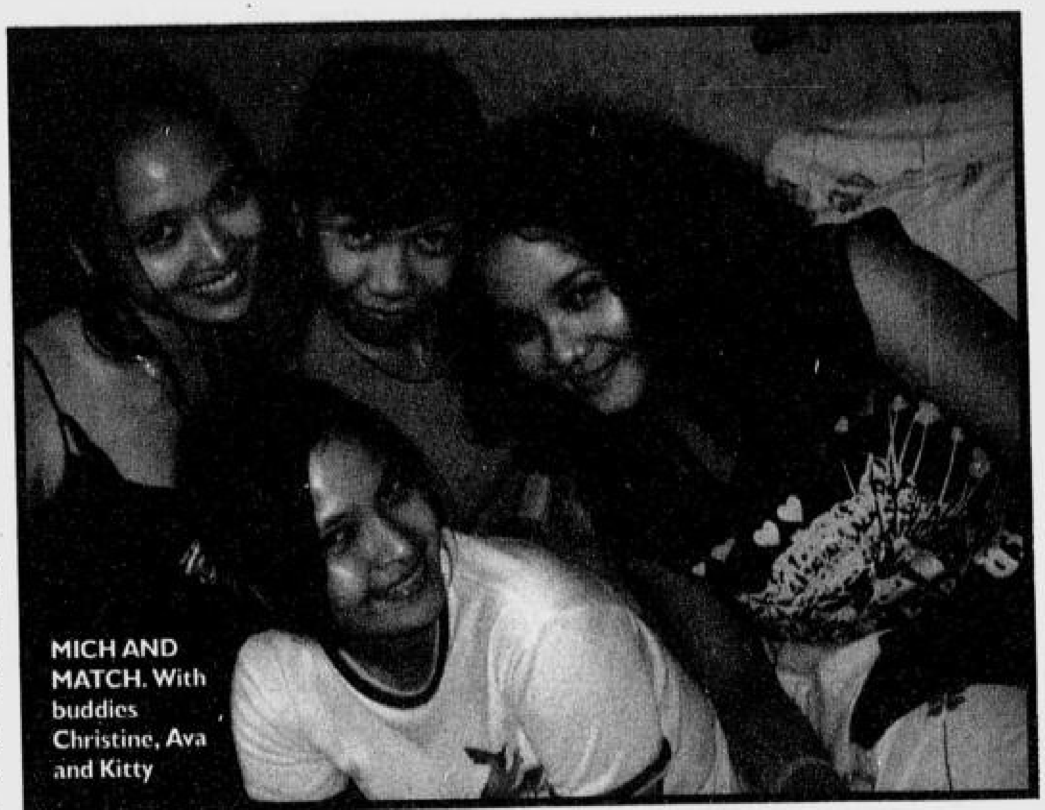
She continued, "We didn't have a sense of time. We would sleep at about 4 a.m. and wake up at around 8 a.m. It was only Bianca (Gonzales) who had a sense of what day it was but Rustom and I would just second guess the time," said Mich when she and her newly outed housemate would look at the contruction nearby and see that the workers were off for lunch break.

Rustom's coming out

Regarding Rustom's coming out to the whole country, she has this to say, "I love, love Rustom! But I didn't know he was gay! I swear I am the queen of the no-gaydars! Maybe because I wanted him for myself," she jokingly admitted while hugging her stuffed toy Porkchop.

"The reason I joined was to show that this is me. That even if you evict me for who I am, that's fine. The thing is, I put myself in an environment where people can judge."

She is fully aware of the people outside who are quick to jump into hasty conclusions. "*Siguro iniisip nila na OA pero para sa amin, yun yung* reality."



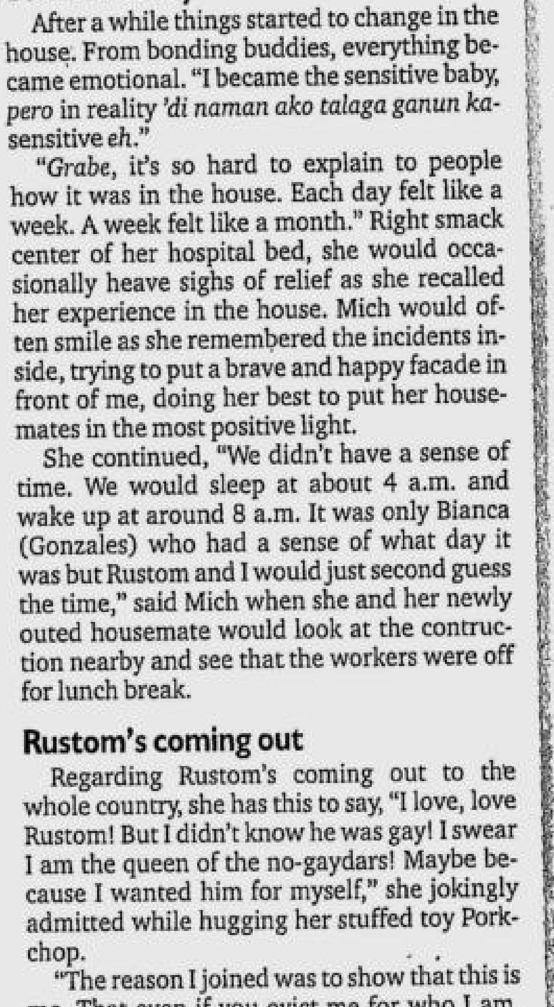
MICH AND MATCH. With buddies Christine, Ava and Kitty

No way to hide

"When you fight with your bestfriend in the house it's really like fighting with your bestfriend. When you're outside and you hate this person, you can just go to the mall and not see her. Inside, we all take a bath together. There's no way to hide and avoid a fight."

"All the tears I've cried in the span of three weeks are more than all the tears I have cried in my whole life. As in I just kept crying. PBB is a reality show but the reality of it is magnified. Like in a normal day, you wouldn't have as many fights, cry or pray that much. But everything there is magnified. Everything is a big deal because you are contained."

Well, now that Mich is out of the PBB house, let's all welcome her back into the real world.



WELCOME back, Mich!

> 'All the tears I've cried in the span of three weeks are more than all the tears I have cried in my life. As in I just kept crying. PBB is a reality show but the reality of it is magnified'

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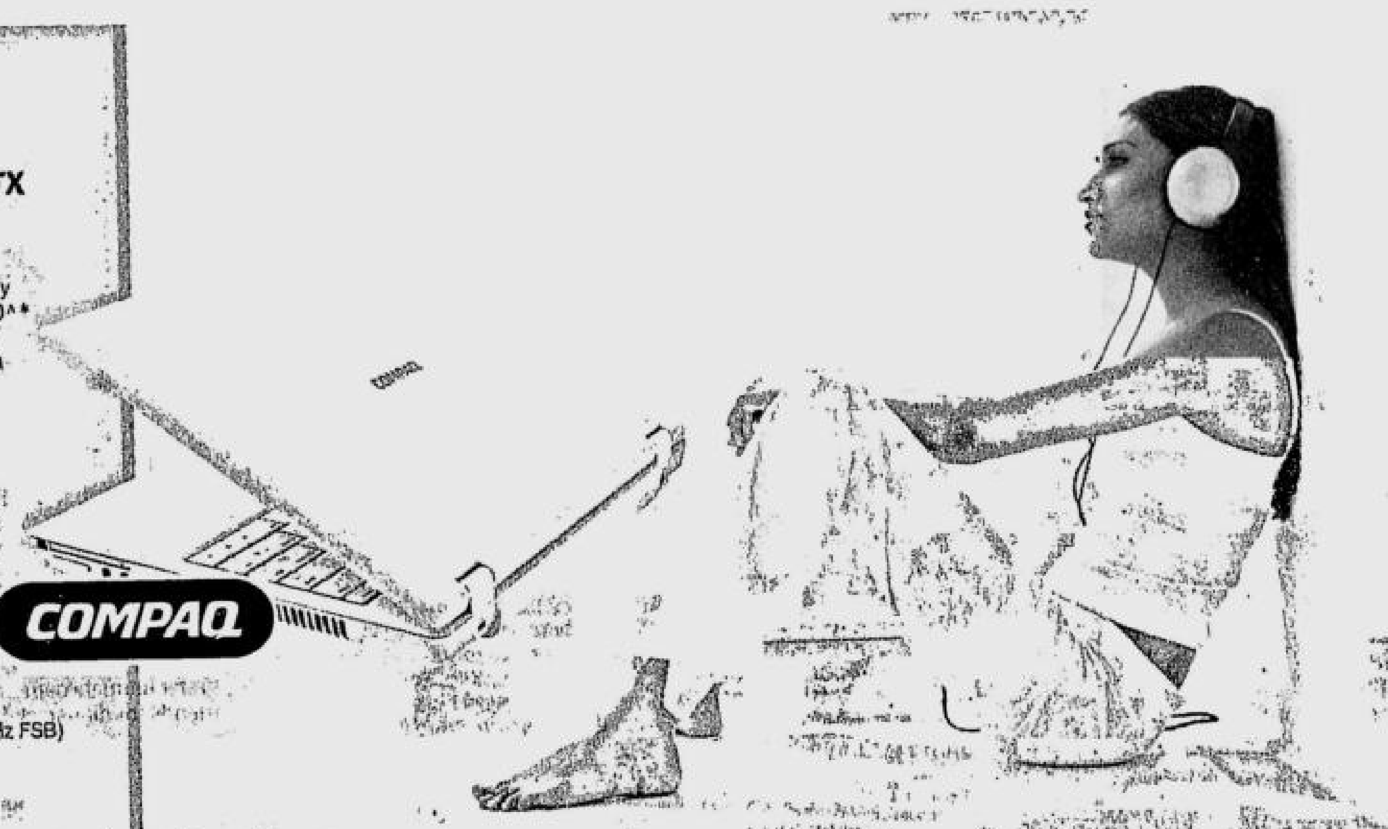

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10c per minute
IDD Top 10
P100
sun CELLULAR PREPAID
50
150
300
500
P50 7 days
24/7 TEXT UNLIMITED
P150 30 days
24/7 TEXT UNLIMITED
P20
24/7
P100 7 days
P350 30 days
CALL+TEXT UNLIMITED
P100 12 days
DAYLITE CALL+TEXT UNLIMITED
sun XPRESS load

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Enjoy 100 FREE texts for every P400 worth of load accumulated within one promo month!

Experience FREE bigtime texting to your friends on Sun and other networks! Go ahead, LOAD MORE and GET MORE!

MECHANICS:

1. Every P400 accumulated load that a subscriber makes within a promo month entitles him to 100 Free Texts, which may be used for both Sun-to-Sun and Sun-to-other-networks texts.
   - For example, P400 accumulated load in March will give you 100 Free Texts and P800 accumulated load in March will give you 200 Free Texts.
2. Promo months are: March 1-31, April 1-30 and May 1-31, 2006. Reloads made within a promo month will not be carried over to the next promo month.
   - Reloads in March cannot be counted in April.
   - Reloads in April cannot be counted in May.
3. Subscribers can accumulate the P400 reload from any combination of Regular Call Cards, Xpress load, 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited, 24/7 Text Unlimited, 24/7 Text Unlimited Lite, Daylite Call and Text Unlimited, IDD Top 10 call cards and Regular e-PINs only.
4. Load purchased via SMS, Convert-a-Load and monthly deposits from SureLoad Subscriptions are disqualified from this promotion.
5. The subscriber will receive a text message with a 14-digit number string not later than 4 days after accumulating P400 reload. The 14-digit number string will expire if not loaded within the defined period. The 100 Free Texts is valid for 30 days from the day it is loaded.
6. The 100 Free Texts is cumulative but not the validity period. The longer validity shall apply.

Unlimited Services apply to local Sun-to-Sun calls and texts.

See posters for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0953 Series of 2006.

sun
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E-mail:
super@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

I am the son of this Beach

Text and photos
by Tim Yap

JUST WHEN you thought you've seen, heard and done it all in "The Bora," (think The O.C.) along comes an adventure that makes you do a double take, and realize that there's more than meets the Borac...eye!

Yes, there's the *tsubibo*, aka The Ferris Wheel, which looks more like a Fairies Wheel. I personally like it (not because I'm a fairy), because it adds a certain surreal touch to the tropical sandscape. There are new spots to explore, too. Did you know that there's this interesting bat cave on Caticlan? That you can

I AM/ E3

UPCAT REVIEW
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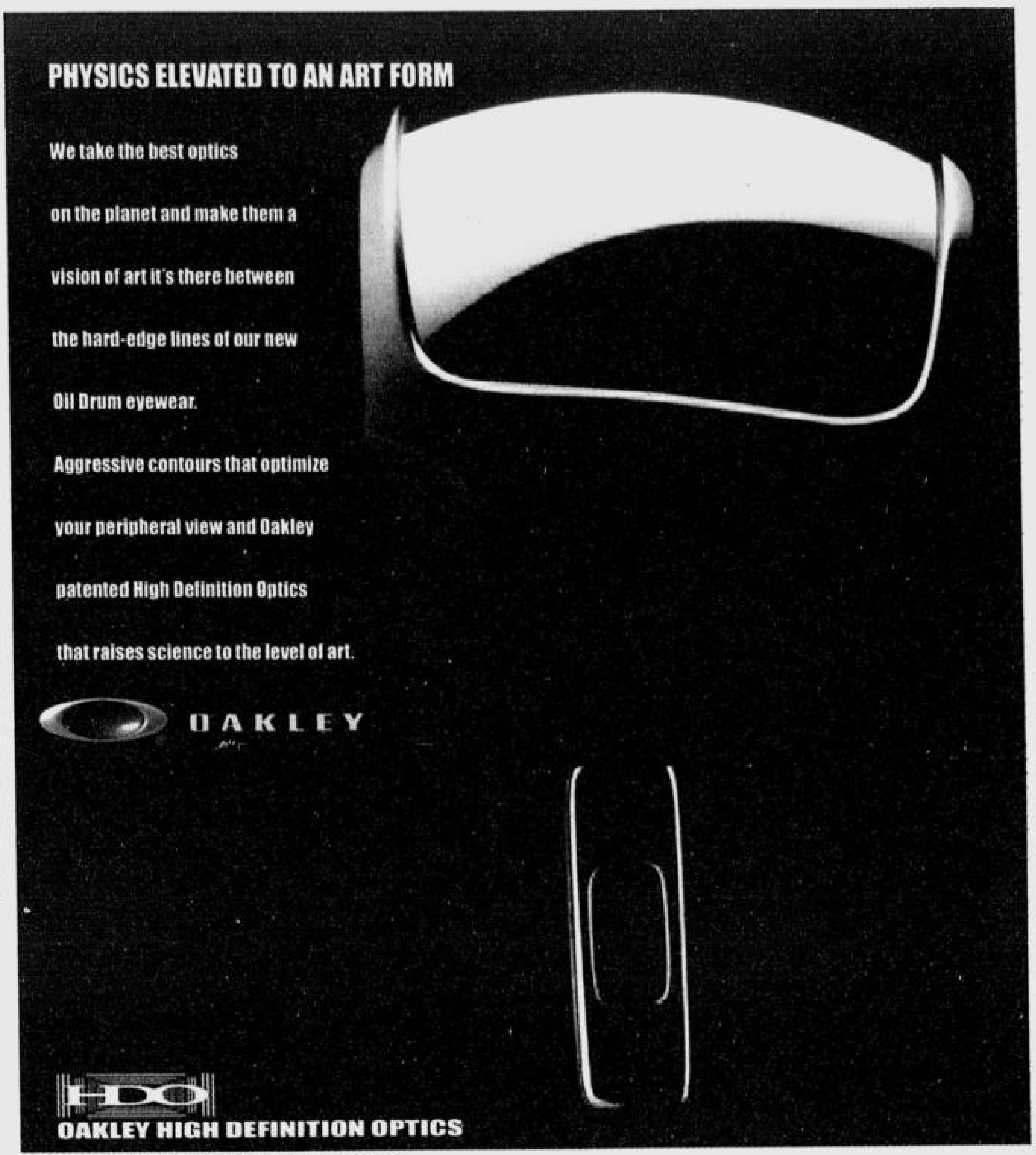
Preparing to go to the prom?
Check out the BEAUTY SALONS classification in the
DPC
YELLOW PAGES



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vision of art it's there between
the hard-edge lines of our new
Oil Drum eyewear.
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- Llanillo Optical - SM Cagayan De Oro
- Magno Optical - Robinsons Metro East, Edsa Shangri - la, Robinsons Galleria Santa Lucia East Grand Mall
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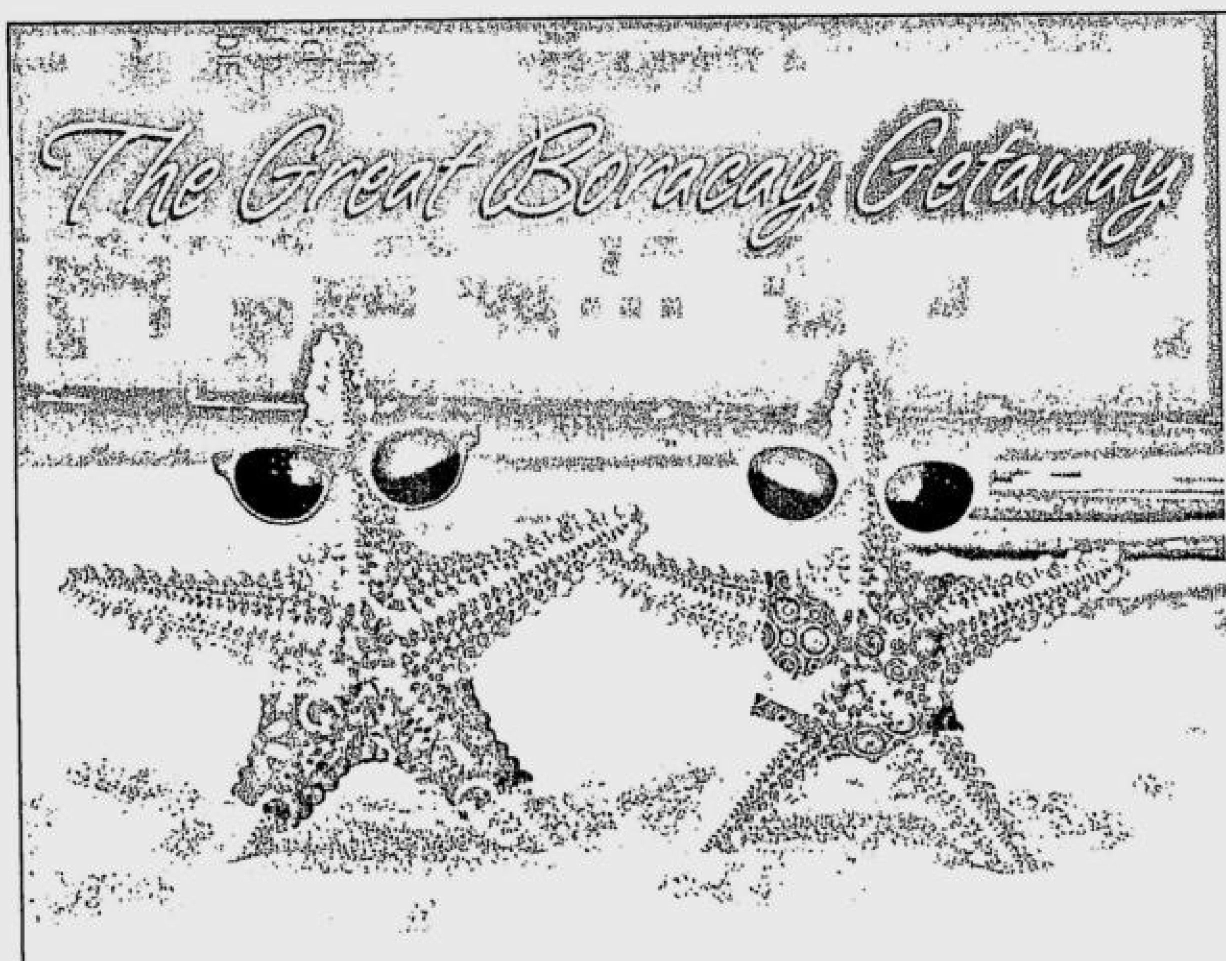
- Perez Optical - Perez Optical
- Sarabia Optical - Rockwell
- Unique Optical - SM Megamall
- YES Optical - SM Pampanga Annex
- G - Force - Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center
- G - Force - The Podium
- Rustans - Alabang Town Center, Glorietta Makati & Shangri - la
- TI02 - Greenbelt
- Alson Auto Center - Cebu



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See flyers for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5639, Series of 2005.
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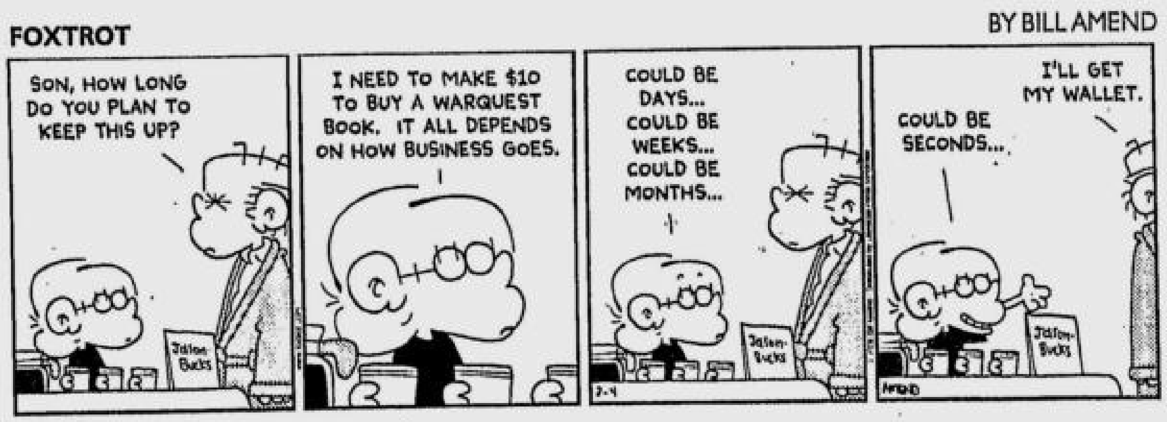
Check the Lifestyle Section every other week for the latest in SM Advantage promos and highlights.

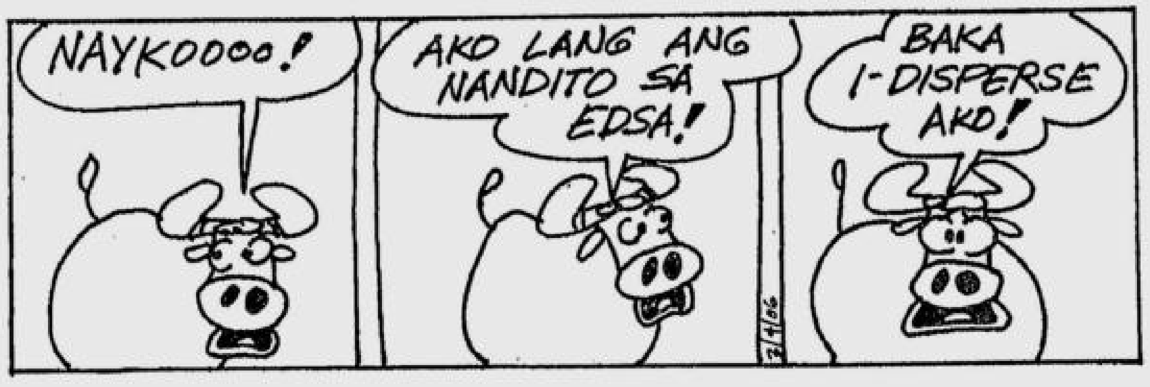
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SON, HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO KEEP THIS UP?
I NEED TO MAKE $10 TO BUY A WARQUEST BOOK. IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW BUSINESS GOES.
COULD BE DAYS... COULD BE WEEKS... COULD BE MONTHS...
COULD BE SECONDS...
I'LL GET MY WALLET.
Jason-Bucks

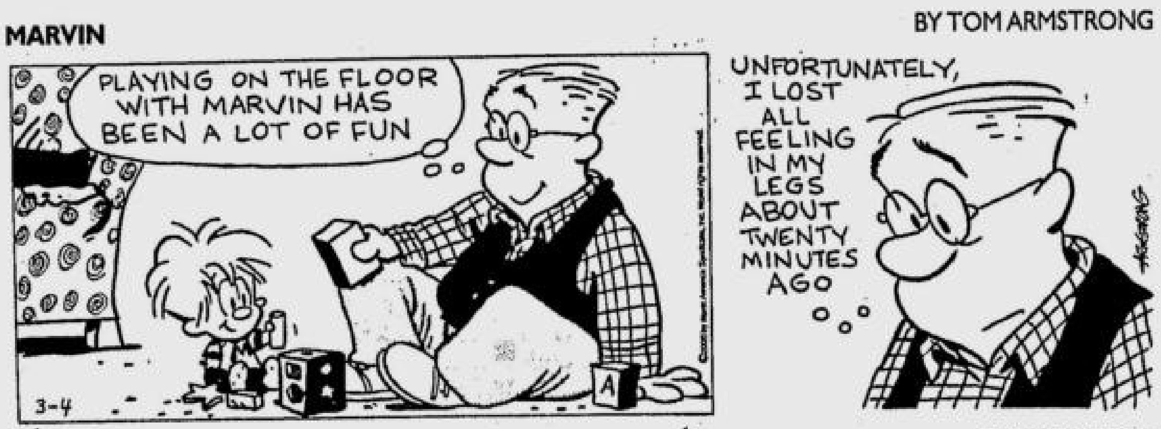
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAYKOOOO!
AKO LANG ANG NANDITO SA EDSA!
BAKA I-DISPERSE AKO!
3/4/06

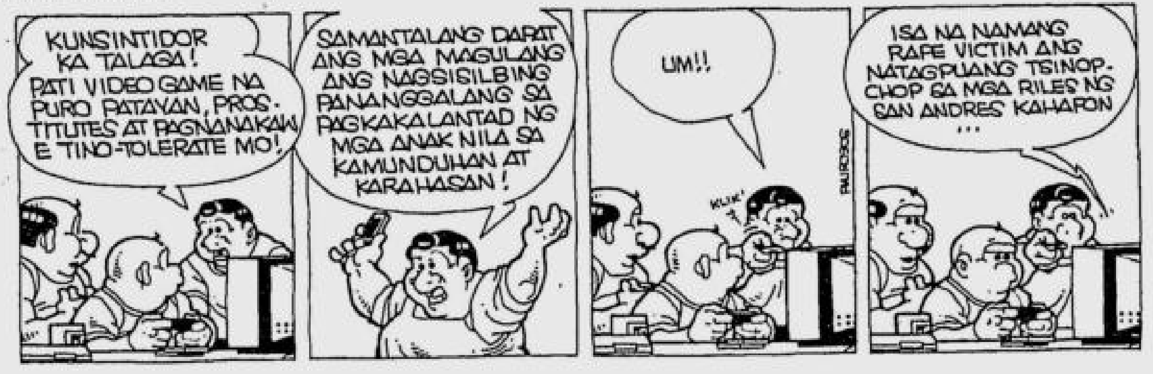
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


PLAYING ON THE FLOOR WITH MARVIN HAS BEEN A LOT OF FUN
UNFORTUNATELY, I LOST ALL FEELING IN MY LEGS ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES AGO
3-4

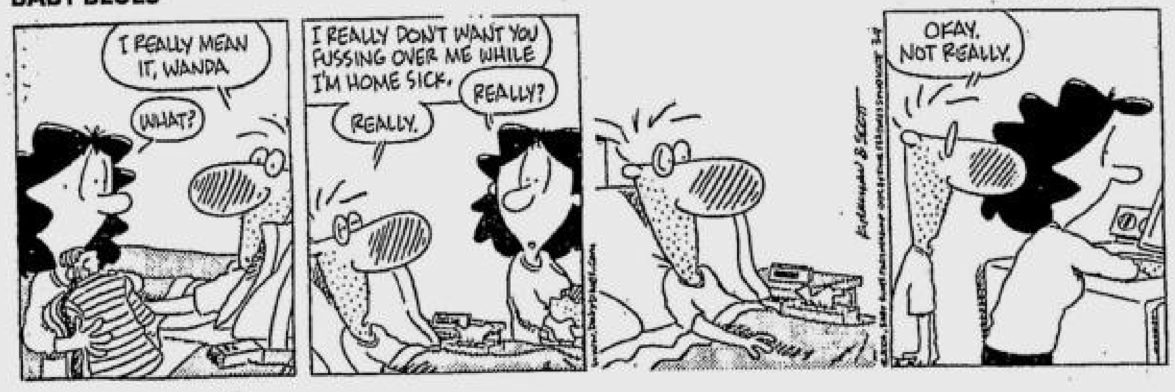
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUNSINTIDOR KA TALAGA! PATI VIDEO GAME NA PURO PATAYAN, PROS-TITUTES AT PAGNANAKAW E TINO-TOLERATE MO!
SAMANTALANG DAPAT ANG MGA MAGULANG ANG NAGSISILBING PANANGGALANG SA PAGKAKALANTAD NG MGA ANAK NILA SA KAMUNDUHAN AT KARAHASAN!
UM!!
KLIK!
ISA NA NAMANG RAPE VICTIM ANG NATAGPUANG TSINOP-CHOP SA MGA RILES NG SAN ANDRES KAHAPON ...

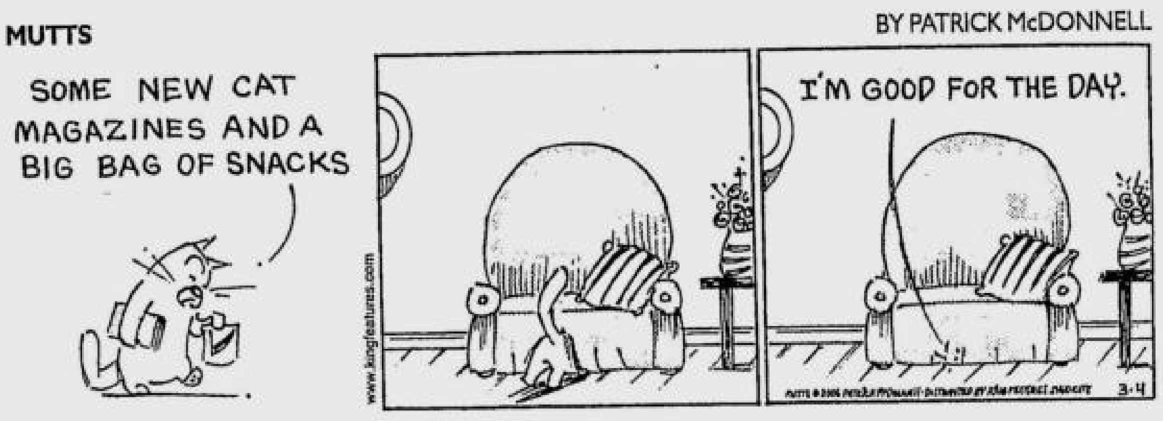
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I REALLY MEAN IT, WANDA
WHAT?
I REALLY DON'T WANT YOU FUSSING OVER ME WHILE I'M HOME SICK.
REALLY.
REALLY?
OKAY. NOT REALLY.

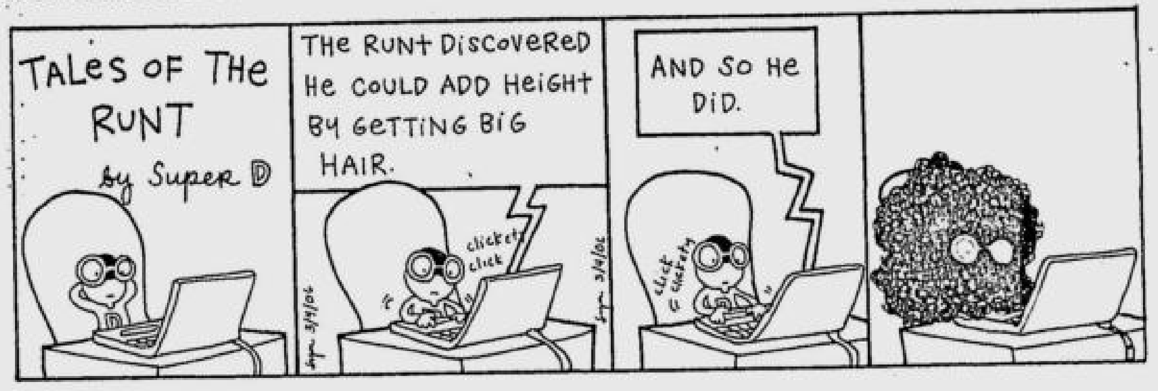
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SOME NEW CAT MAGAZINES AND A BIG BAG OF SNACKS
I'M GOOD FOR THE DAY.
www.kingfeatures.com
3-4

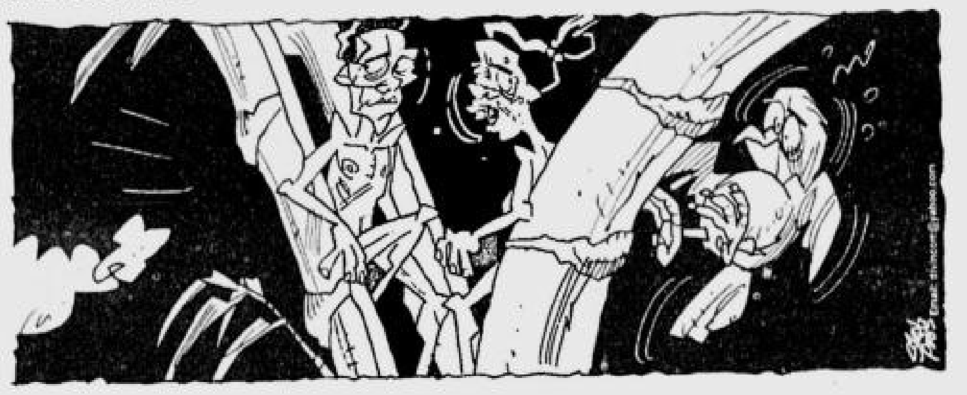
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


TALES OF THE RUNT by Super D
THE RUNT DISCOVERED HE COULD ADD HEIGHT BY GETTING BIG HAIR.
clickety click
AND SO HE DID.
click clickety

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



NABIYAK
ANG
KAWAYAN AT
LUMABAS SI
PAYATOT
AT SI
PANGIT

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly independent. You can work alone if you need to. (Many of you are actually shy.) You have a fine mind and excellent powers of concentration. You enjoy doing good work; you also appreciate when others admire what you do. The year ahead is beautifully social! Expect pleasant, fun times. Partnerships and close friendships are particularly blessed.

Birthdate of: Miriam Makeba, singer; Patricia Heaton, actress; Landon Donovan, US soccer player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your research abilities today are amazing! Dig deep for any answers that you're looking for. Avoid power struggles with the government and large institutions.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You read a lot of newspapers; you're also a history buff. This makes you interested in politics. Nevertheless, don't force your opinions on others today, especially when talking to friends or groups.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might encounter somebody who is very forceful today. You'll have to defend yourself. Don't do anything underhanded; keep everything aboveboard.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You can't help being obsessed with some kind of idea today, perhaps related to politics, religion or philosophy. That's OK. Just don't try to make everybody else agree with you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your ability to see beneath things today lets you discover secrets about others. This same ability beautifully enhances any research you have to do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might sound like a stuck record when talking to others today. That's because you're obsessed about something! Don't get hung up on a particular detail today. Lighten up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ability to discover hidden things can serve you well at work today. Nevertheless, don't become so obsessed that you forget everything else. Strive to keep a balanced point of view.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be gentle with children. Avoid power struggles with romantic interests or young people. It's too easy to get off track and become obsessed about something today. (Not good.)

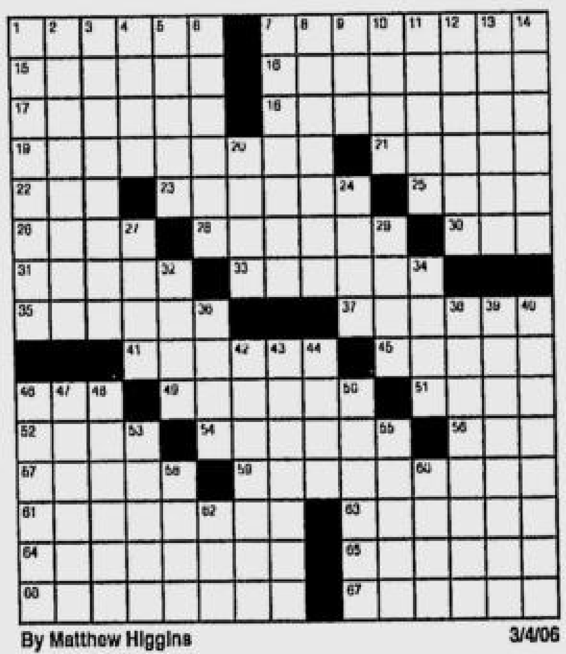
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be gentle in your discussions with family members today. Don't try to win an argument. Instead, use this intense energy to clean up laundry and garbage areas.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might be a victim of compulsive thinking today. You can't get an idea, or a song, or a person out of your mind. Relax. This will be gone in 48 hours. (Thankfully!)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Watch your spending habits today. You might part with money because you can't resist something. Try to be levelheaded about financial matters. Guard against obsessive impulses.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): People seem to be intent on winning arguments or forcing others to agree with them today. You might fall into this as well! Just cool your jets. (Nobody likes "pushy.")

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

3/4/06

ACROSS

1 Draw together tightly
7 Condenses
15 Moralizing discourse
16 Most clamorous
17 Madison or Fifth
18 Be the most influential
19 Enduring
21 Binding device
22 Boxer Laila
23 Dark red gem
25 Abominable snowman
26 New walkers
28 Indian instruments
30 Lair
31 Veracity
33 Elder
35 Trouser leg measurement
37 Artful deceptions
41 Fleshy-lipped fish
45 Tool for evening
46 Easter treat
49 Children of Uranus
51 Turkish bread?
52 Poet Teasdale
54 Doctor, slangily
56 Part of DJIA
57 Early spring bloomers
59 Not intolerable
61 Gnu or nilgai
63 Windup
64 Do-over litigations
65 Engaged in swordplay
66 Establishes a will's validity
67 Quenches

DOWN

1 New Delhi flatbread
2 Miss Lonelyhearts' advisees
3 Retired professor's title
4 Square of three
5 Held fast'
6 Laughing canines
7 Allegretto-adagio tie
8 Of true-false logic
9 Periphery
10 Fertility goddess
11 First name in beef stew
12 Equipped
13 What we will?
14 Intervene
20 Writer Murdoch
24 Math course
27 Mulligan's dish
29 Dish with stock
32 Poet Crane
34 Small stream
36 Disfigure
38 Easygoing and unworried
39 Signer-on
40 Wakame and kelp
42 Chase or jack lead-in
43 Dejection
44 "National Velvet" author Bagnold
46 Inner side of a fortifying ditch
47 First Roosevelt VP
48 Small cave
50 Mars by scraping
53 Sour, formerly
55 Bay window
58 Hipbones' upper portions
60 O'Neill's Christie
62 Mare's morsel

Friday's Puzzle Solved

T	I	P	P	E	R	■	L	A	Y	S	■	A	L	B
I	N	S	A	N	E	■	O	R	A	L	■	S	U	E
S	K	I	R	T	S	■	A	I	R	E	■	T	A	G
■	■	■	T	R	I	E	D	A	N	D	T	R	U	E
A	S	G	O	O	D	A	S	■	■	G	H	O	S	T
S	C	O	O	P	E	R	■	I	D	E	A	■	■	■
H	A	N	K	Y	■	■	O	N	E	S	W	O	R	D
E	N	E	■	■	P	O	T	S	Y	■	■	K	A	Y
S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	■	■	S	O	A	M	I
■	■	■	R	N	A	S	■	A	C	T	U	P	O	N
R	E	A	C	T	■	■	S	H	O	O	T	I	N	G
O	N	T	H	E	U	P	A	N	D	U	P	■	■	■
A	D	O	■	A	T	O	P	■	I	T	A	S	C	A
S	U	N	■	R	A	N	I	■	N	E	C	T	A	R
T	E	E	■	S	H	E	D	■	G	R	E	E	N	E

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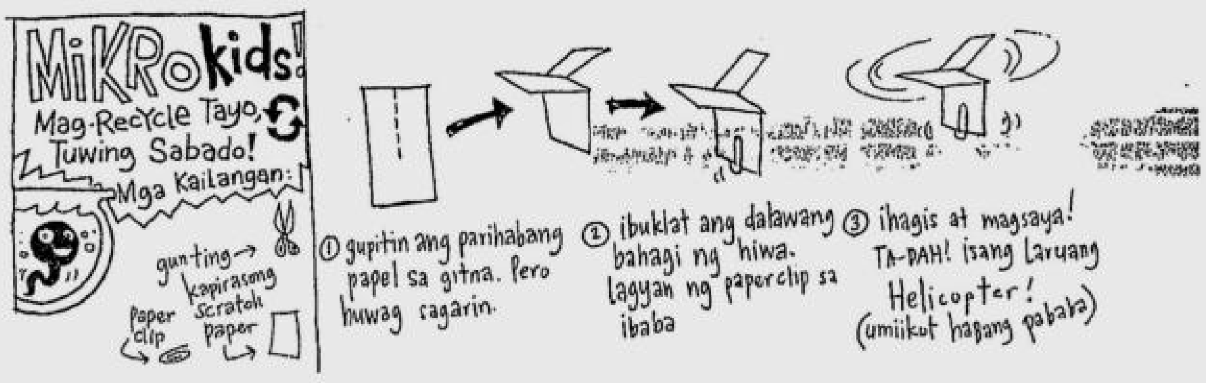
3/4/06

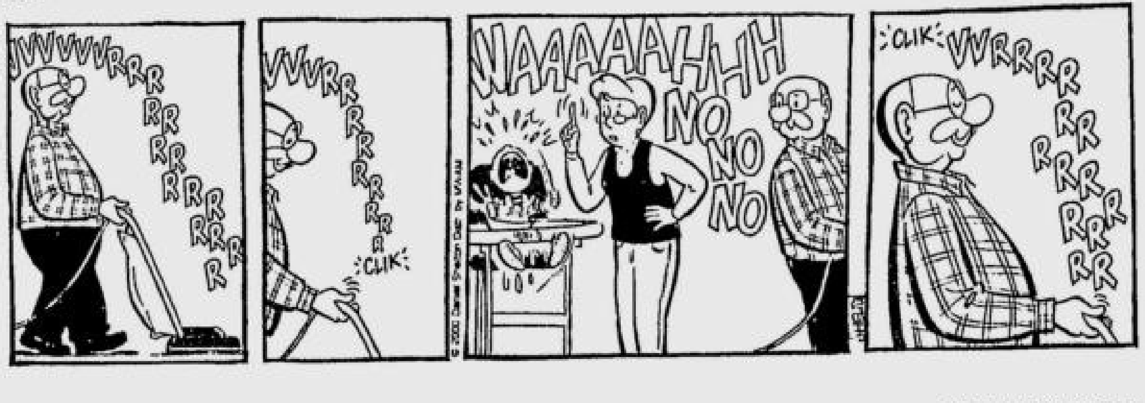
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRokids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
gunting
kapirasong scratch paper
paper clip
① gupitin ang parihabang papel sa gitna. Pero huwag sagarin.
② ibuklat ang dalawang bahagi ng hiwa. lagyan ng paperclip sa ibaba
③ ihagis at magsaya! TA-DAH! isang Laruang Helicopter! (umiikot habang pababa)

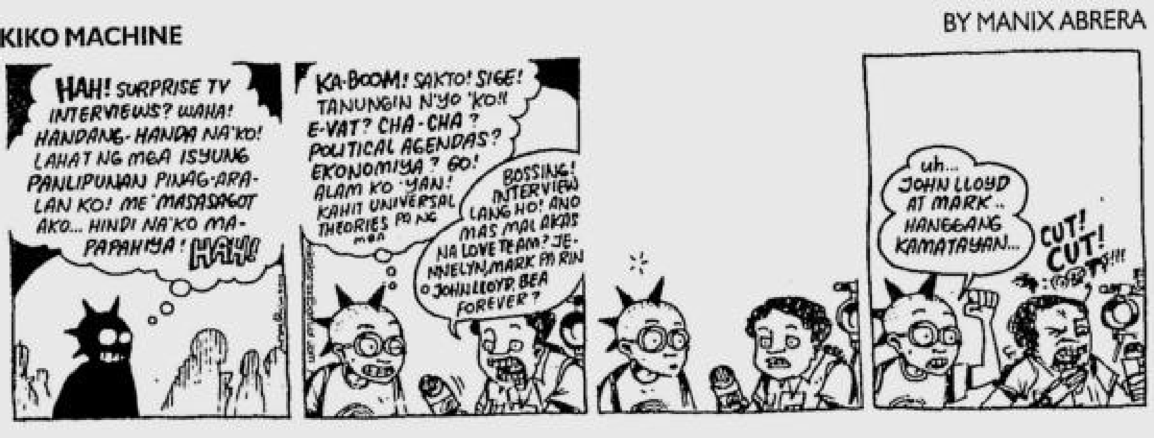
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


VVVVVVRRRRRRRRRRRR
VVVRRRRRRR
CLIK
WAAAAAHHH
NO NO NO NO
CLIK
VVRRRRRRRRRRRR

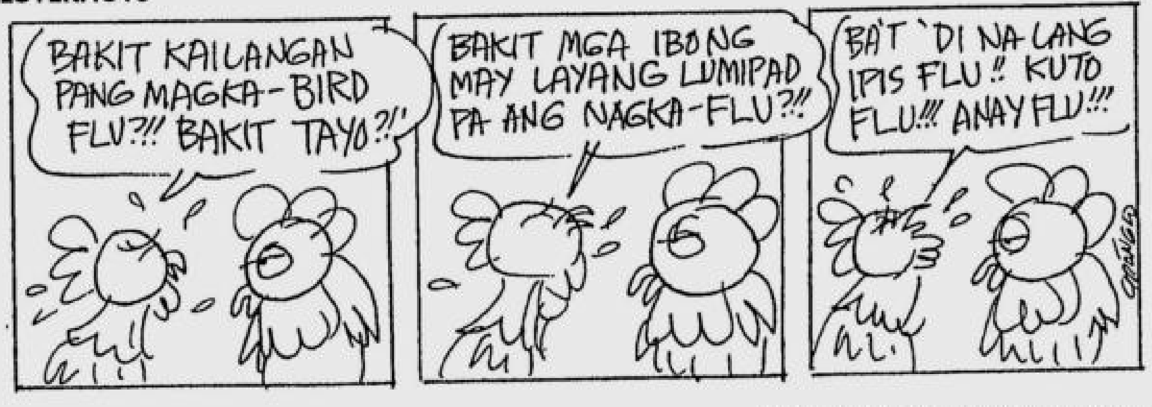
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HAH! SURPRISE TV INTERVIEWS? WAHA! HANDANG-HANDA NA'KO! LAHAT NG MGA ISYUNG PANLIPUNAN PINAG-ARALAN KO! ME' MASASAGOT AKO... HINDI NA'KO MAPAPAHIYA! HAH!
KA-BOOM! SAKTO! SIGE! TANUNGIN N'YO 'KO!! E-VAT? CHA-CHA? POLITICAL AGENDAS? EKONOMIYA? GO! ALAM KO 'YAN! KAHIT UNIVERSAL THEORIES PA NG MGA
BOSSING! INTERVIEW LANG HO! ANO MAS MAL AKAS NA LOVE TEAM? JENNELYN, MARK PA RIN O JOHN LLOYD, BEA FOREVER?
uh... JOHN LLOYD AT MARK.. HANGGANG KAMATAYAN...
CUT! CUT!

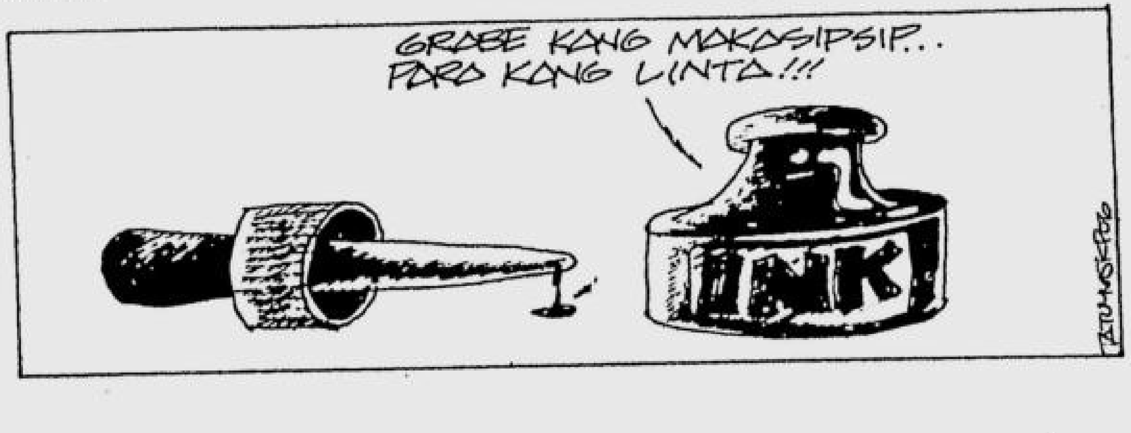
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

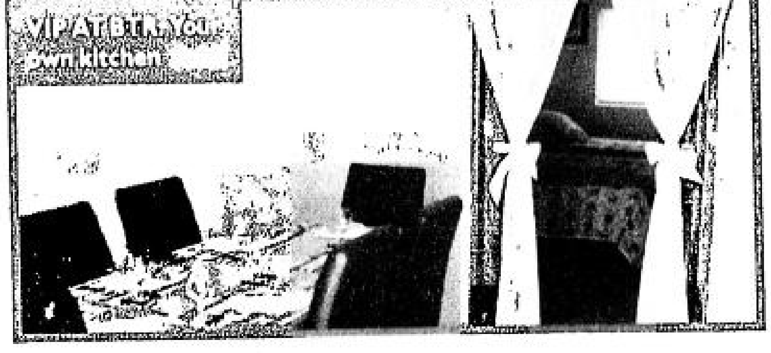

BAKIT KAILANGAN PANG MAGKA-BIRD FLU?!! BAKIT TAYO?!
BAKIT MGA IBONG MAY LAYANG LUMIPAD PA ANG NAGKA-FLU?!!
BA'T 'DI NA LANG IPIS FLU!! KUTO FLU!!! ANAY FLU!!!

TULDOK

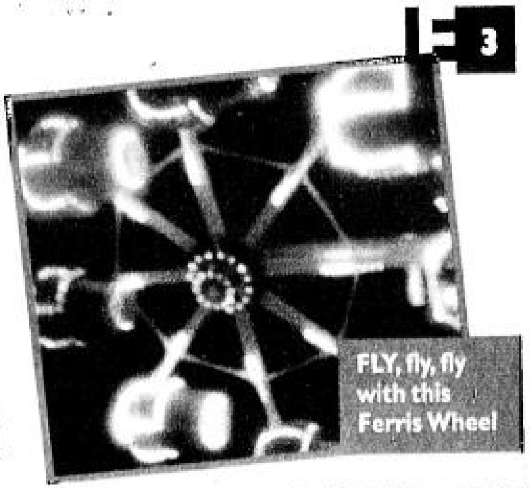
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


GRABE KANG MAKASIPSIP.. PARA KANG LINTA!!!
INK

MAYOR'S MAYOR: Mimi Abriam of Cafe Ischia with Malay Mayor Don Cawaling having lunch at Escondido Crab House

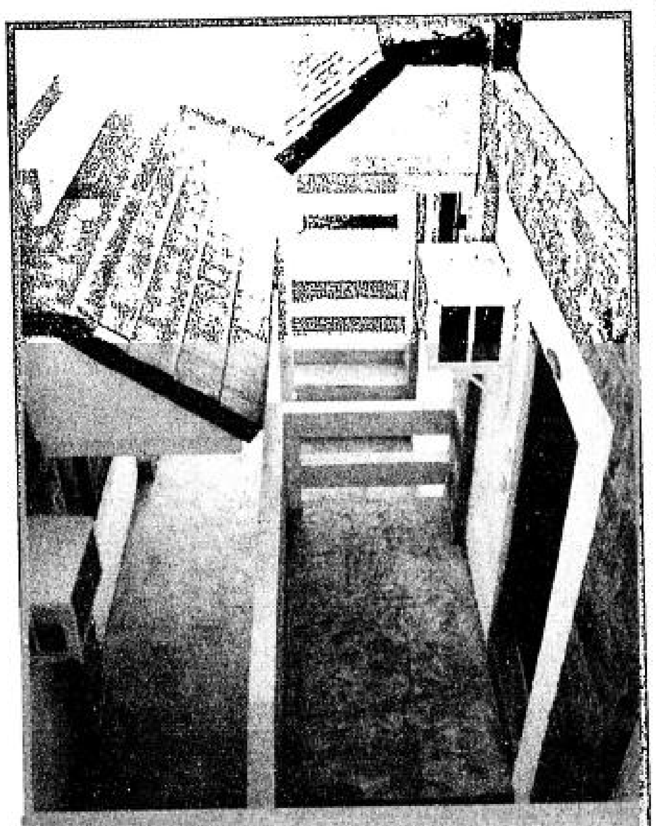


VIP AT BTR: Your own kitchen



FLY, fly, fly with this Ferris Wheel

I am the son of this beach



BALAY APARTELLE: New luxury living concept by Steve Tajanlangit

SAKAY na sa beach na!

From page E1

have lunch in a river with your feet on the water, just 15 minutes from the airport?

Have you tried the new restos on Bulabog side? Stayed in the newest resort developments on all sides of the island? You wanna try great Greek food in D'Mall?

Malay Mayor, the Hon. Ceciron Cawaling-- I call him Mayor Don-- became my personal escort and tour guide to these new discoveries, and more. I've been coming to Boracay since I had black hair—only now did I explore these hotspots away from the so-called Makati Beach. Now I can definitely tell myself that I am a true son of this beach.

Let me spell it out for you.

B–is for Boracay Terraces Resort's new wing called Balay Apartelle. Right at the tip of Station 1, these sprawling loungey apartments spell luxury and comfort away from it all. The suites, owned by Bora godfather Steve Tajanlangit has its own kitchen and dining room, perfect for entertaining guests in your home away from home.

O–is for Oh-So-Relaxing secret spot called Palomaria—A Surfer's Kitchen owned by formerly Manila-based architect and designer team of Ian and Leah Bautista. "When you need a break from the party crowds on White Beach, take a trike from D'Mall and tell them to take you to Palomar, on Bulabog." Twenty minutes away from the beach is this secret spot called Palomaria, a small chillax spot built around a Palomaria tree. Kite surfers, hip locals-in-the-know and the occasional wayward tripper all gravitate to-

I AM/ E4

1 out of 3 children afflicted by the traitor disease will die.

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There is a traitor disease that afflicts children, even those aged 2 years and below. It kills more than a million babies every year. This traitor is called Invasive Pneumococcal Disease or IPD.

It can lead to Bacterial Meningitis, a kind of IPD that infects the covering of the brain and spinal cord and could kill your child in two days. If your child does survive the next two days, don't celebrate—severe complications can include massive brain damage leading to mental retardation, seizures, and paralysis—conditions worse than death.

According to a study conducted by Dr. Rose Capeding et al of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (R.I.T.M.), 90% of IPD's occurrences were seen among children below 5 years old, 78% were less than 2 years of age. Almost all invasive pneumococcal diseases were seen in children below one year of age. 1 out of 3 of those afflicted died.

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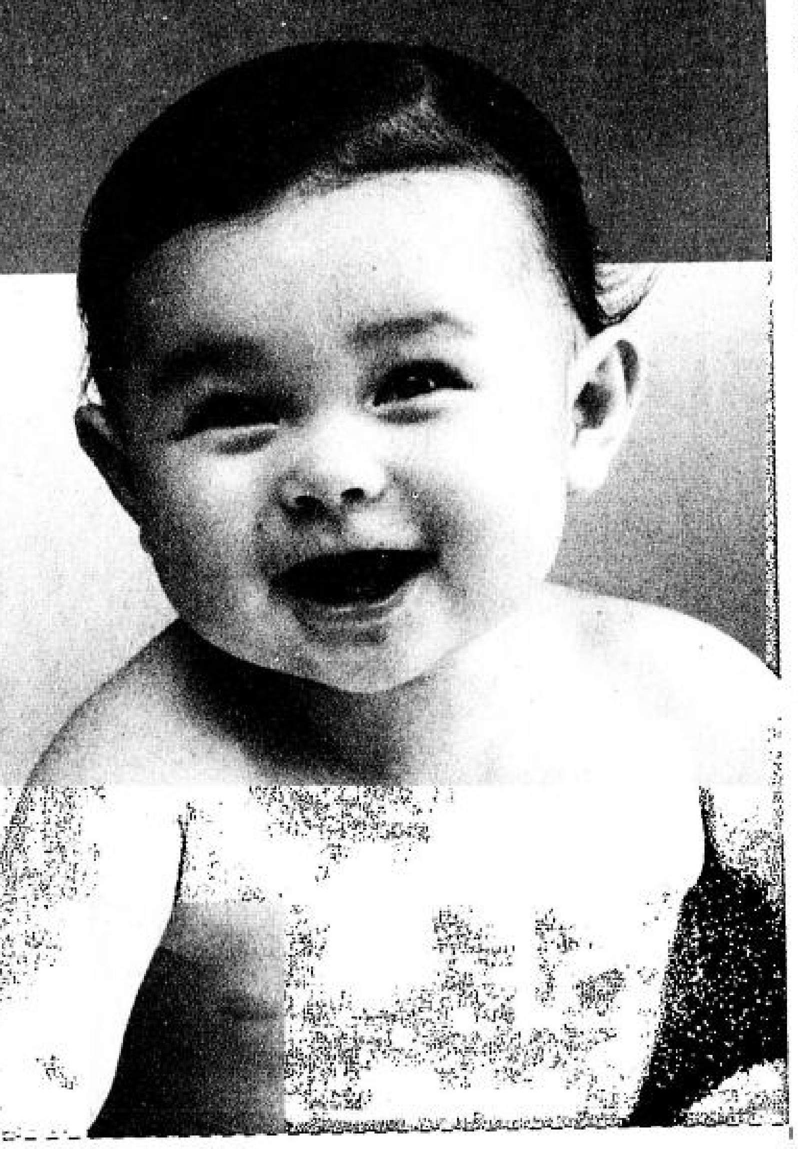
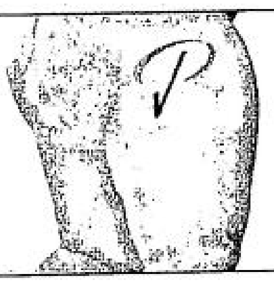
Ask your pediatrician about the IPD vaccine. Choose prevention before it's too late.

ipd
invasive pneumococcal disease

Ask your doctor about it.





( ) Yes, I want to know more about IPD! Please send me more information.

Name: ________________

Address: ________________

Contact No. ________________

Kindly cut and fax to 8846780 or send to Pharma Division, Wyeth Philippines, Inc. 2236 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City 1200

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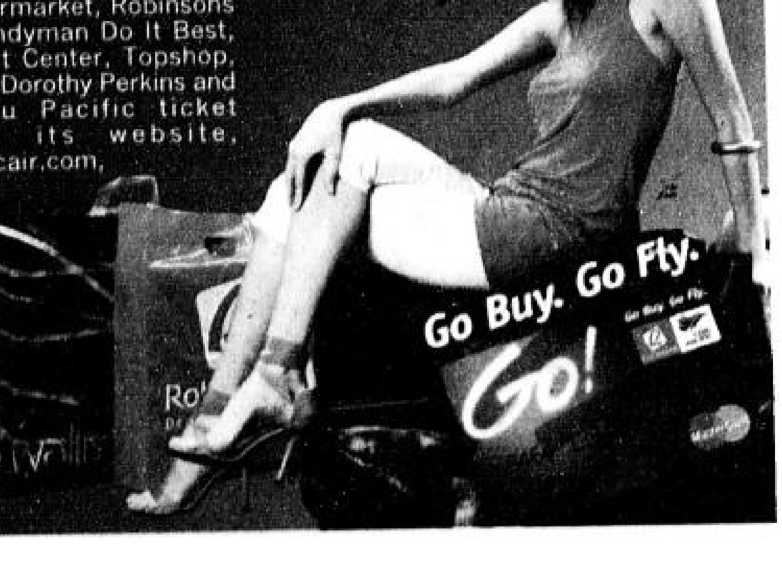

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SAKAY NA: Waling Waling's Mr. Sakay and friends

CYMA MASTER: Nino Zulueta's proud new baby

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LIFESTYLE MEGA: [illegible]

WALING TRIO. Cutie Del mar, Tals Diaz and JM Rodriguez

I am the son of this beach

From page E3

wards this beach-nik hotspot.

R–is for the River, called Nabaoy River, which is 15 minutes from the airport. You can either ride the tricycle or van or multicab. Think Villa Escudero in Caticlan, where you can get your feet wet having a great meal in the middle of the river, complete with tribal troupe in their *bahag* best. Dyango heads the Tambulan Group, whose music and dancing serves as perfect accompaniment to a spread of local delicacies that is best enjoyed *kamayan* style.

A–is Asya—Situated at an unlikely area (near the Police Station on Station 3), this hidden enclave owned by Choy Cojuangco features Asian-inspired interiors by Bacchus Zulueta. Each room is masterfully designed to Zen perfection, with glass doors opening up to a private garden, spacious bathrooms and Bali-esque decor. Another great escape to check out. A also stands for Asian Spirit, the leisurely way to fly to this island.

C–Cyma—This new jewel on the culinary front is so popular that if you haven't heard of it, you're so Bora *baduy*. Owned by now Bora resident Nino Zulueta, it boasts of great tasting dishes served right away. It has an open kitchen so you see the attention to detail that intends to make you feel like a god or goddess in the Greek isles. C—also stands for Cafe Ischia, who is proud to be the "first airconditioned bar in Bora." Owned by Ariel and Mimi Abriam, this pink colored bar is fast becoming popular among hot locals who like to cool down. The last C stands for "cave," as in Pangihan Cave, which is in Baranggay Poblacion, a five-minute trek from the Malay Munisipyo—a true blue bat cave, if you care to see one.

A–Arriving in style with the Beach-ney. This proposed new form of transportation will soon be the ride du jour on the island. For a flat fee, you get a pass which allows you to hop on/hop off all the spots from within the island. This colorful version of a golf cart can seat 12 at a time, including tall Caucasians and basketball players. The beach-ney—it's a jeepney for the beaches'...tourists.

Y–is for Yummy! I heard chef Antonio Sanchez of Banza is opening up a new resto at D' Mall. We sampled his Portuguese fare at Banza at Station 3, and I swear, it was one of the most memorable meals I've had of late. Another one is the crab house at Escondido resort, owned by Greg Keyser. They import their crabs from Roxas City, and concoct their own versions of chili, pepper and garlic crab. This hideaway (which is what Escondido means) even has fully furnished rooms with jacuzzis and private huts. But, the Escondido crab takes the cake... And eats it, too!

N–Niña Bustamante of Island Chicken Inasal. Everytime you head over the *tsubibo*, turn your head to the right and look for the place that is always full. That's Island Chicken Inasal, famous for their, what else? Homemade leche flan, and the chicken inasal, whose taste still lingers in my mouth. *Kansi*, their version of the *bulalo* is also to die for.

O–is for the Office of Mayor Cawaling, the main man who is urging tourists to seek out other sides of Boracay. I think he is doing a great job.

W–is wow! Wow Philippines, wow Boracay!

For inquiries, please call Barbara Flores, Head, Malay Tourism Office, (036)2887108 or 09177454466

THE ESCONDIDO MAN: Greg [illegible]

ISLAND'S BEST: [illegible]

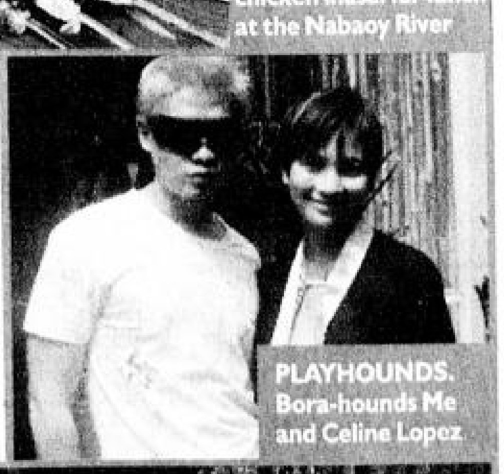
DJ [illegible] Wheel

AMERICAN IDOL: [illegible]

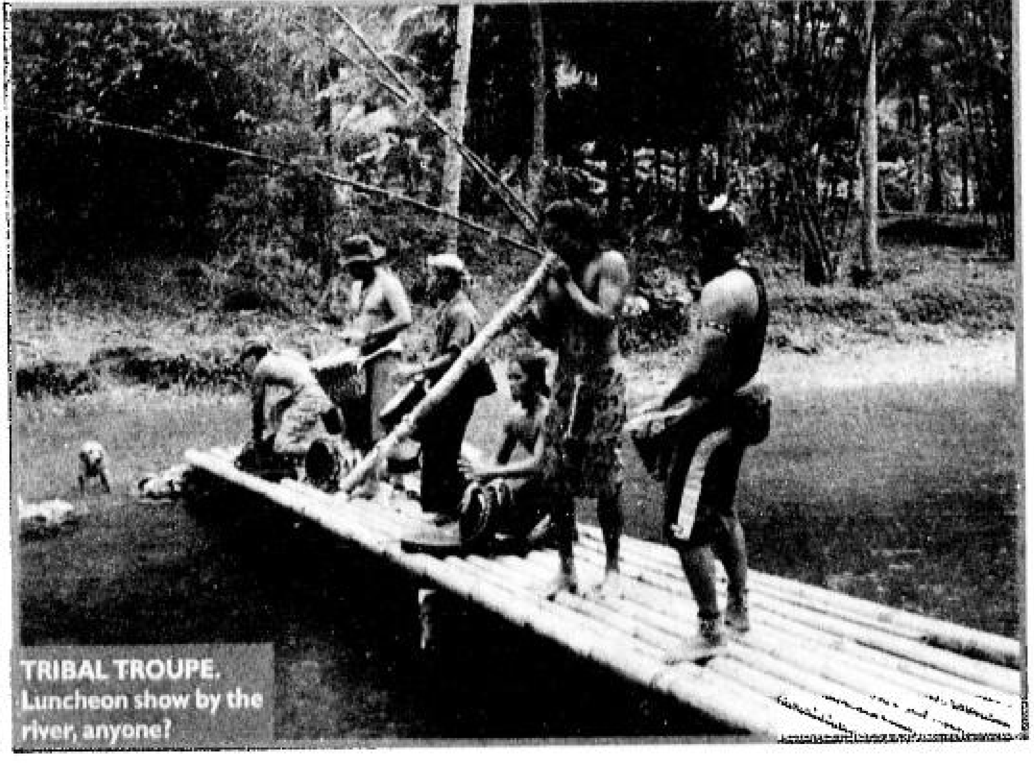
ANYTONIO Sanchez of Banza

SPECIAL THANKS: BONI [illegible]

YUM YUM [illegible] chicken inasal for lunch at the Nabaoy River



PLAYHOUNDS. Bora-hounds Me and Celine Lopez



TRIBAL TROUPE. Luncheon show by the river, anyone?

Rock Ed Philippines: Focus on Leyte

The mud washed away everything
but their chance to begin again
so we will come to the center of the city
from dark bars with our rock bands
& we will stand side by side
until we make a bridge of dry land
back to a place
which promises to hold them safe
for each other's children
back to a place
called Free

-Gang Badoy
adopted from Andreas' "Promise"

PHOTO BY REM ZAMORA

ROCK ED PHILIPPINES, A VOLUNTEER group that advocates civic-mindedness through the arts is spearheading a concert entitled Rock Ed sa CCP: Para sa Leyte! The concert will be held at sunset (6 p.m.) on Tuesday March 7, 2006 the CCP Main Theater's driveway ramp facing Roxas Boulevard. Planned in a very short span of time, Rock Ed is overwhelmed at the quick and generous response of the artists who all volunteered to perform for free. This way 100% of the proceeds will go to Leyte.

The line up so far goes as follows: Radioactive Sago Project, Noel Cabangon, Up dharma Down, Juan Pablo Dream, Giniling Festival, Paramita, The Dawn, Sound, Grey Skies Sessions, The Late Isabel, Makatha, Kjwan, Stitches, Jeepney Joyride, Spenglers, Cover Me Quick, Menaya, Bateria, Reggae Rock, Shards of Ice, Reklamo, VirginHunters, Cocojam, Formula Juan, Torotot Festival, Sweet Potato, Cynthia Alexander and many many more.

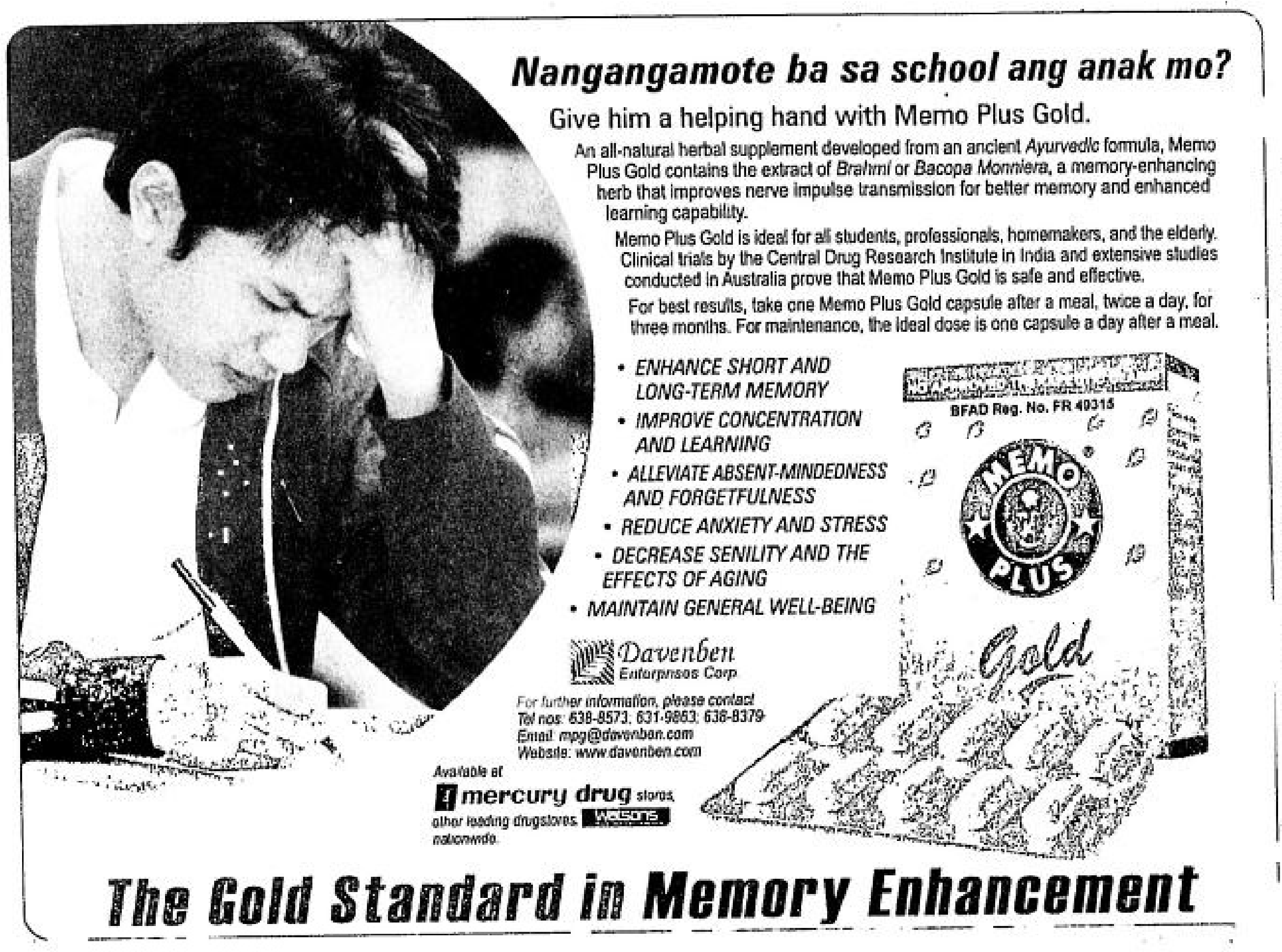
This concert has a lot of heart

(Keep posted for updates on the line up of artists on www.rockedphilippines.org) The list is still growing. A minimum donation of P100 will be asked of you at the gate. The stub comes with a free glass of San Miguel Pale Pilsen. McDonald's is our food support partner for the evening as well.

Rock Ed Philippines is proud to have succeeded in getting the most unexpected combination of groups to come together to try to address some needs of the Leyte survivors. Imagine the Cultural Center of the Philippines, The Home of NU Rock NU107, Terno Recordings, Dakila-Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism, Preview Magazine, MTV Philippines and Rock Ed Philippines all taking the effort to work together despite differences in styles, visions, and natures of work. That alone is a feat. In any case, this Para sa Leyte consortium makes a statement that "unity never meant uniformity and diversity never meant discord."

Classical musicians and rock stars, fashion mavens and NGO volunteers, purists and fusion-oriented artists have come together because of compassion for others. Truly they join the voice saying, "No More Excuses, Philippines!"

People will also have opportunities to donate even if they can't watch the concert. You may check the Rock Ed website for more details. www.rockedphilippines.org. To donate you may text 0906-271-7287.



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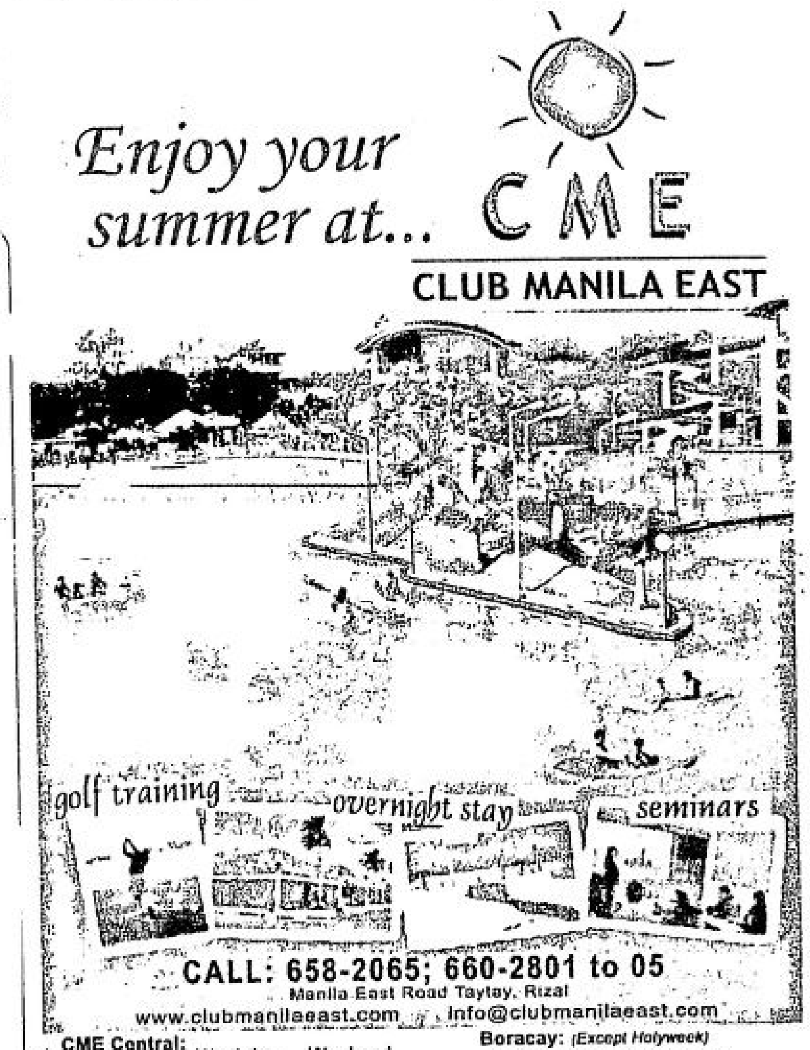

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better choices | better life

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Agora Youth Awards

Roslyn Chua tops 2006 Agora Youth Awards

AGORA
YOUTH
AWARDS

National Winners

Reynaldo P. Gabunada, Jr.
Ateneo de Manila University

Joseph Albet R. Buddahim
University of the Philippines-Diliman

Ysabella P. Cainglet
University of the Philippines - Visayas

Maria Kris Ann A. Llanes
Ateneo de Manila University

AR B. Polinar
New Era University

Michelle V. Grejaldo
University of the Philippines - Visayas

National Finalists

Jocno V. Nabor
Central Luzon State University

Stephen V. Fajardo
Mindanao State University - IIT

Vivien Betsy B. Fuentebella
Southville Foreign Colleges

Nathanie K. Sy
Chiang Kai Shek College

World-class marketing. World-class mindset. Entrepreneurial spirit. These are some of the enviable attributes that set apart this year's Agora Youth Awards. Indeed, the cream of the crop.

Roslyn Chua is a BS Management Major and minor in Entrepreneurship at the Ateneo de Manila University. A self motivated leader who works best with a professional team. Her openness and willingness to learn is a result of her diverse experience working with people from different culture and backgrounds in both academic and working fields. She is also the President of her own start-up business involved in beverage and manufacturing industry. And she is only 21 years old.

The whole experience leading up to becoming one of the National Finalists for the 2006 Agora Youth Awards was both exciting and challenging for Roslyn, believing that it not only broadened her knowledge but also heightened her passion for marketing.

Reynaldo Gabunada and Kris Ann Llanes, also from Ateneo de Manila University; Albet Buddahim , President of the Philippine Junior Marketing Association from UP Diliman, Michelle Grejaldo and Ysabella Caiinglet from UP Visayas and AR Polinar of the New Era University were also declared Agora Youth Awardees for 2006.

Other national finalists include Vivien Betsy Fuentebella of Southville Foreign Colleges, Jocno Nabor of Central Luzon State University, Stephen Fajardo of Mindanao State University - IIT and Nathaniel Sy of Chiang Kai Shek College.

These national finalists were invited to a 2-day training seminar at Unilab Head Office, the topic discussed in the 2-day event were: Personality Development and Presentation Skills presented by Butch and Gwen Albarracin of Center for Pop Music Philippines, Brand Management and Advertising by Jos Ortega of BrandLab, Market Research Overview by Nick Fontanilla of The ACRE, Inc and Strategy Formulation by Edwin Mapanao of Unilab Animal Health.

The Philippine Marketing Association mounted the 2006 Agora Youth Awards to recognize the best and the brightest marketing students today. Started in 1991 and initially called TOMAS-TOSMA or Ten Outstanding Marketing Students and Three Outstanding Students Marketing Association, the Agora Youth Awards has already recognized over 100 outstanding marketing students nationwide.

Inspired by the prestigious Agora Awards that select the best among marketing professionals and academes.

Jemilee Perez, last year valedictorian, is now working with Unilever. Edgar Caper, batch valedictorian in 2003 TOMAS TOSMA, is now the Retail Store Brand Manager of HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives. Dianna Aaron, Lawrence Galindez and Gerald Moscardo also work at HBC as brand managers. Last year's winners, Angel Maquilinq and Martin Sunaz, now work with Nestle Ice Cream. Other winners are now with big companies like Philip Morris, Unilever, Procter & Gamble and San Miguel Corp to name a few.

The Philippine Marketing Association in cooperation with the Association of Marketing Educators and Philippine Junior Marketing Association, chose the regional winners based on their project involvement, awards and recognition, documents presentation and written case analysis of Univet's dog food brand. The national winners, meanwhile, were judged solely on their marketing strategy presentation on www.yehey.com case last Feb. 25 at the Elks Club. National judges were Emerico de Guzman (PMAP), Tom Banguis (2006 President, Philippine Marketing Association), Donald Lim (www.yehey.com), Jade Tulio (HBC), Wennifer Chan and Cindy Banaria (Nestle Ice Cream). This year's batch is again worthy to be called world-class future marketers.

Association Winners

Ateneo de Manila University

University of the Philippines - Diliman

San Beda College

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

Marketing Society, Inc. (UPV)

Messages

Warmest greeting to the Philippine Marketing Association as you hold the Annual Agora Youth Awards.

Your organization has played a pivotal role in the unprecedented growth of the Philippine Industry for the past several years. Our consumer's interest in purchasing new and innovative products can, without a doubt, be attributed to the ingenuity of our promising marketing students in positioning their products in the competitive market.

I congratulate the winners of this year's Agora Youth Awards for their remarkable achievements. Let us work hand-in-hand to create a conducive business environment for local and foreign investors. Together, we can truly bolster our already emerging and strengthening economy.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Congratulations to the Agora Youth Awardees! The future of the Philippine marketing profession, as the country braces for globalization and moves up to a stringent, challenging world-class standard of excellence.

We honor and applaud you as the finest among your peers, and pray that you will continue to be the epitome of excellence amidst intense competition, as you have proven at this early stage of your development.

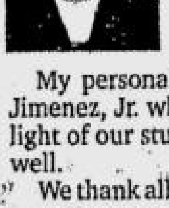
We challenge you to be at the forefront of the Philippine Marketing Association's theme, battle cry and advocacy to "Move up to World-class" and demonstrate that the Pinoy marketer has the discipline, drive and most importantly, creativity to compete anywhere.

Kaya Natin!

TOM C. BANGUIS, JR.
President
Philippine Marketing Association

Young. Intelligent and Dynamic. These words best describe this year's batch of Agora Youth Awardees. As the search for the Philippine's Best Marketing Students comes to a close, it is gratifying to note that there is a pool of talented marketing professionals in this country that can compete with the world's best. Not only are they conversant about the latest marketing principles, they are also culturally attuned and techno and market-savvy. What is even more remarkable is the passion, confidence and leadership they have shown at a very young age. Congratulations to all the Agora Youth Awardees. You are truly world-class!

JOJO ALERO
VP Youth & Academe
Philippine Marketing Association



It is with great pleasure and elation that we salute this year's winners of the Agora Youth Awards.

I would like to personally relay my sincerest thanks and appreciation to this year's board of judges, entities and sponsors who gave their overwhelming support in making this event a landmark success.

My personal thanks to our speaker, Mr. Menardo "Butch" Jimenez, Jr. who delivered a very inspiring message to the delight of our student finalists, PMA members and our guests, as well.

We thank all the students, parents and the schools they represent. Your participation provided us the inspiration to move on.

I extend my congratulations to all who won. Your achievement has made us all proud.

To all of you, may you continue to inspire others with your Agora Award - a symbol of marketing excellence and a challenge to achieve even more in the future.

Mabuhay!

RUBY T. RAMORES
Over-All Chairman
Agora Youth Awards

This year's Search for Agora Youth Awardees was focused on challenging young marketing students to become world-class marketers.

Towards this end, we injected changes to this year's competition. We dared the candidates to come up with innovative ideas. We pressured them to confront competition and turn out something more than the extra-ordinary, something to surprise not just delight the panel.

We challenged them that if the graduates of past years were able to prove their worth as creative, innovative and trend-setting marketers, the weight on their shoulders is far greater because they are considered better equipped than their predecessors. If they were able to make waves, then you are expected to create tsunamis.

Instead of just one case study, we stirred their imagination by giving them two projects. The first case focused on how a new pet food company could carve its own niche in the pet food industry. The second dared them to find ways how www.yehey.com could be at par with current leaders in the E-market and Internet service providers.

For the first time, we conducted an in-house seminar workshop where various topics were discussed, among others, Strategy Formulation and Application like the Apprentice module. Market Research and Tools by SPSS's Dr. Nick Fontanilla. Presentation Skills and Personality Development were handled by Gwen and Butch Albarracin of the Center for Pop Music Philippines. Their creativity was challenged by Jos Ortega of BrandLab, who discussed "What is your Brand Story?"

Likewise, our candidates joined an educational tour in which they were exposed to the operations of various companies like Nestle Ice Cream, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, a homegrown which aims to go global and GMA 7, the premier TV network in Asia.

This year's Agora Youth Awardees emerged from 56 entries from 19 schools all over the country and are now among the elite 10 outstanding graduates who made it to the regional finals and thus, regarded as the "cream of the crop" among young marketers.

Now, they are ready to compete in a flat, borderless and smaller world. They will compete in an absolutely new playing field where a host of multinational and multicultural players fight for success.

There's a phrase in the Bible which state: "To whom much is given, much is expected". Much has been provided for our awardees and much expected from them. To be world-class is your challenge, *Kaya ninyo ito!* Go and conquer the world!

EDWIN C. MAPANAO
Chairman Search
2006 Agora Youth Awards

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION
MOVE UP TO WORLD-CLASS
Kaya Natin!

Butch Jimenez, whose main advocacy is with the youth shared important lessons to the winners of the Agora youth marketing awards as they plan their careers in marketing. Taking off from the classic book "Positioning" written by Al ries and Jack Trout, Butch told the students that they have to be the "top of mind" of their bosses, and they must "burn" a positive attribute in the minds of their colleagues in order to succeed.

He focused on two attributes they needed to develop within themselves. The first is discipline, and the second is to execute. Butch shared that the ability to execute is what separates good employees from great employees.

"You can strategize, analyze, and come out with a perfect plan, and that's good. But you'll never be great until you execute the plan," said Butch.

Finally, he told them to focus on their young careers, but to always keep an eye on the country. He told the audience what he taught his team in PLDT as the Leyte tragedy was unfolding, that "though we have a business to run, we first have a country to serve." In which case his Retail Business Group team now ran a fund raising campaign that would meet both goals—beat their target and raise money to help rebuild Leyte.

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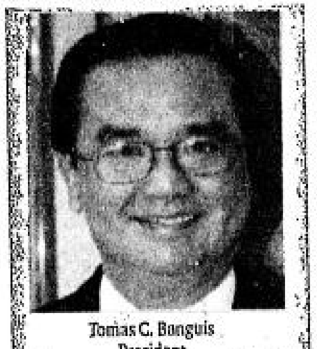

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Shown are (from left) Edwin Mapanao, search chair; Richard Añonuevo, project coordinator; Al Viscara, ways and means; Gennie de Guia, program; Ruby Ramores, over-all chair; Jojo Ajero, vice president for youth and academe and Andrew Que, staging.

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Chowking's 'Braveheart' Marketing
The Way to a Customer's Heart

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL COMPANY IS A GREAT marketing story waiting to be told. In the case of Chowking, the story starts the day it was born. As far as traditional Filipino dining experience goes, Rudyard Kipling's classic line, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" still resonates. Filipinos trooped to the corner restaurants in Binondo's Chinatown for a bowl of noodle soup and dimsum; they stopped by the nearest hamburger store for a slice of American life with cheese and fries.

That is, until 1985 when Chowking Food Corp entered the market and did what was once unthinkable: to make East and West meet right at its store.

Pioneering the quick-service (QSR) Oriental restaurant concept, Chowking offered steaming hot and delicious Chinese food served fast food-style by a smiling and friendly crew. Its stores donned bright and dynamic colors usually associated with American diners.

It was an innovation only a company that knows what it stands for, what it can offer, and what it can offer best would take. From its birth, Chowking was already blazing the trail with the bravest of hearts.

"Trailblazers take on the greatest risk, but they are also poised to reap the greatest reward," says Chowking's president and CEO Raffy dela Rosa.

Looking at how it has grown over the years, the Chowking story is nothing short of phenomenal. In just five years, Chowking more than tripled its annual sales to P7.2 billion in 2004 from P1.9 billion in end 1999 when the company joined the Jollibee Group of Companies.

Next to Jollibee, Chowking now leads fast food establishments in the store count with 316 Philippine stores as a result of its financial viability in key cities and sites nationwide. It has also started its aggressive global foray by recently setting up three stores in Indonesia in addition to its eight stores in the United States and four in the United Arab Emirates.

The 'FSC' way

"When we took over Chowking in 2000, we worked on turning the company around. To do this, we had to answer: 'what would make the customer want us?'" Dela Rosa says. "The answer ultimately led us to our mission: to delight the customer."

Chowking applied a very simple formula: FSC (where F" stands for food, "S" for service, and "C" for cleanliness). All aspects of the business—from operations to support services—are measured by these three standards. For its customers to know what Chowking truly stands for, the company relied heavily on marketing.

"Everything we did—from the boardroom to the stores, from the commissary to the kitchen, and from the crew to the table—bore the touch of marketing. All our actions were premised on what will make the customer happy," Dela Rosa says.

What made Chowking a marketing success was the involvement of everyone in the company—from the CEO to the chefs, to the commissary, down to the stores. Everybody markets "brand Chowking"—from the culture to the smile.

Out of the Chinese box

The men and women who drove the brand made sure Chowking is not just always a step ahead. They also took seriously the two Chinese characters beside the company's logo, which, translated in English, mean "a cut above the rest." To do this, the company employed some "out-of-the-box" thinking.

It took a long hard look at its products and designed a product pipeline that will continually keep its customers coming back for more, for all parts of the day—breakfast, lunch, *merienda* (midday snack), dinner, and late dinner. Chowking relied heavily on the recommendations of its two Chinese chefs who never ran out of delicious food concepts. The brand even created a New Products Board, a group headed by the CEO himself in charge of creating new and exciting offerings and as needed, re-engineering of the existing ones.

Chowking advertisements were also designed and executed out of the ordinary. Instead of relying on celebrity endorsers, Chowking focused the spotlight on its biggest star: its mouth-watering Chinese food. Special cameras, not normally used by its competitors, were used during TV commercial productions to differentiate the look and feel of Chowking materials. With the images shown in very slow speed, viewers can almost smell and taste the steam coming out of a bowl of noodles. The image is strong enough to stimulate the eye and whet the appetite of every viewer who will most likely troop to the nearest Chowking store.

Chowking also used non-traditional advertising and relied heavily on outdoor ads to trigger product desire at points of purchase. It even defied convention and put up billboards and signages in places where there used to be none—at the roof of its stores, in front of gas stations and in areas that cannot hold big boards. As a result, the sales of Chowking stores with non-traditional outdoor advertising support have been hitting targets consistently.

Chowking also invested on in-store merchandising and even tapped one of the world's best menu board designers to make the Chowking menu board. The strategy paid off as customer-visits and spending-per-transaction increased due to the variety of delectable dishes displayed in the menu boards.

A latest innovation is the introduction of the open kitchen in Chowking stores. The innovative merchandising concept was adopted to show Chowking customers how the food they ordered are prepared and cooked right in the store, and that every Chowking store adheres to strict standards of cleanliness.

While every groundbreaking idea spawned a rash of imitations, Chowking believes it is only by moving fast and moving forward could it remain ahead of the game.

"These are market fundamentals that allowed us to compete in an environment that gets tougher as we go," Dela Rosa says. And as "Marketing Company of the Year" in the 2005 Agora Awards, "We believe that with sheer dedication, hard work and some luck, we can compete head-on with global brands in foreign markets as well."

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86 Mayflower St., Mandaluyong City

4. This is a nationwide promo covering areas of the eighteen (18) business developers from Sarimanok Feeds Company, Inc.
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7. In the monthly draw, there will be 108 winners and 423 consolation prizes to be given away.

1st Prize- *Power Trio*
2nd Prize- *Conditioning Showcase*
3rd Prize- *Breeding Showcase*
Consolation Prize- *12 Gift Packs*

8. In the grand draw, there will be a total of 40 winners from all areas and 192 consolation prizes will be given away.

1st Prize- Power Trio
2nd Prize- 21" Sony Colored TV
3rd Prize- Sony Mini-Component
4th Prize- Conditioning Showcase
5th Prize- Breeding Showcase
Consolation Prize- 24 Gift Packs

9. Schedule for draws are as follows:

1st monthly draw- May 5, 2006
2nd monthly draw- June 9, 2006
Final Draw- July 7, 2006 (86 Mayflower St., Mandaluyong City)

10. A BFAD representative will be present during the monthly and grand draws.
11. The 1st prize winners' store partner will get P5,000 worth of Thunderbird products in the monthly draws, and P10,000 worth of Thunderbird products in the grand draw.
12. Non-winning entries will automatically qualify for the final draw.
13. Winners will be called and/or notified via mail.
14. Promo starts March 1, 2006 and ends on June 30, 2006.

Individuals below 18 years old are not qualified to join.

Winners will be announced in Tukaan, Sundays, 12nn at IBC 13

See poster & print ads for more details. Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0275 Series of 2006.

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